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LIGHT ON THE GOSPELS

Church Year and Festival Illustrations

BY

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LIGHT ON THE GOSPELS

The First Sunday in Advent

Matthew 21: 1-9

1. Advent

The motto of the First Sunday in Advent, in the early Roman Church, was *Aspiciens a longe*,—"Beholding from afar."

2. Advent Sunday

Dr. Johnson wrote in his manuscript diary for 1774: "27 Nov.: Advent Sunday. I considered that this day, being the beginning of the ecclesiastical year, was a proper time for a new course of life. I began to read the Greek Testament regularly at 160 verses each Sunday. This day I began the Acts."

3. Citation from Bunyan's "Holy War"

"Then went out the inhabitants of the town of Mansoul with haste to the green trees and to the meadows, to gather boughs and flowers, therewith to strew the streets against their Prince, the Son of Shaddai, should come; they also made garlands and other fine works, to betoken how joyful they were, and should be, to receive their Emmanuel into Mansoul; they also prepared for his coming what music the town might afford, that they might play before him to the palace, his habitation."

4. The Passover

It is the Passover time; great numbers of people have come to Jerusalem. Josephus, with what was once deemed exaggeration but is now supposed to be a correct statement, affirms that sometimes as many as three million strangers came to Jerusalem to the Paschal feast. This number was about half the population of the two provinces of Judea and Galilee. The number of lambs slain in sacrifice at these great Passover feasts Josephus puts at 256,500. The Jews came from Arabia, from Babylonia, from Asia Minor, from Greece, from Italy, and probably also from Gaul and Spain, in order to be present at the historical Passover.

5. Behold thy King cometh unto thee. (v. 5)

The day is coming on which the cry, "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee," shall again be heard, but the little word "meek" shall then be omitted. Instead of this word we shall hear: "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee with great power and glory."

6. Thy King cometh unto thee, meek. (v. 5)

King Oscar II of Sweden was the most versatile of the regents of Europe. The entire world respected and honored him not only as the arbiter of the nations, or for his mastery of some thirteen languages and many other accomplishments, but also for his Christian principles. The English evangelist, Josiah Nix, was given audience with the king during one of his visits in Bergen. On the basis of an utterance of the evangelist the king asked: "Are you a disciple of Jesus?" "Yes, your Majesty," was the reply Nix gave, "the least of His disciples." "Then, please do not call me your Majesty," the king said. "We are one in Christ Jesus." Giving him his hand the king dismissed his visitor.

7. General Allenby. (v. 7)

When, during the World War, the news came that the British armies had captured the city of Jerusalem all Christian lands rejoiced. For thirteen hundred years, with the exception of a little while, Jerusalem had been in the possession of the Moslems. It has always seemed strange that the city where Jesus worked, and preached, and where He died on the cross, should have been so long in the hands of people who did not love and honor Him. When the British army finally took the city that great and good man, General Allenby, left his horse outside and marched in on foot. He did not think himself worthy to ride in triumph into the city through whose streets Jesus rode and was acclaimed by the multitudes.

8. Clothes to tread on. (v. 8)

Plutarch mentions it as a circumstance of respect shown to Cato the Younger upon a particular occasion by the soldiery, that they laid their garments for him to tread upon as he marched.—*C. Bulkley*

9. Hosanna. (v. 9)

An elderly Christian, whose custom it was to write a Scripture passage appropriate to the season of the Church Year, and hang it over his bed, chose for the season of Advent the single word, "Hosanna." Johann Sebastian Bach always wrote over his musical compositions *Jesu iuva!* (Lord, help!)

10. King of Kings. (v. 9)

There is a beautiful incident told of the coronation of Queen Victoria. The young queen had been instructed to keep her seat, though everyone else was to rise, while Händel's "Messiah" was being rendered toward the close of the ceremony. Though the Commons and the nobles and the clergy were to stand with uncovered heads, it was thought fitting that royalty should be distinguished by remaining seated upon the throne of power. But as the beautiful oratorio proceeded, it is said that the young queen was visibly affected. When the crowning chorus was reached, she trembled at the words: "And he shall reign and reign forever." And when the next sublime line rolled upon the wings of melody, "Lord of Lords and King of Kings," the young queen could stand it no longer but rose weeping to her feet, and removed the crown from her head in the presence of Him who is supreme over all.

And I would that high over every other motive, aim and aspiration, we shall all strive to honor Christ supremely; to love Him sincerely; to serve Him humbly; and to make Him in our hearts and homes and lives "Lord of Lords and King of Kings."—*Straton*

11. Christ as King. (v. 9)

Many years ago a Methodist preacher, William Dawson, was preaching in London on the divine offices of Christ. He was only a plain farmer, yet his vivid imagination and his wonderful command of language enabled him to sway the largest audiences. He had portrayed the Saviour as teacher and priest and now he proceeded to picture him as King of kings. He drew a graphic picture of a coronation. The immense procession was marshaled, and moved toward the white throne to crown Christ as king. So vividly did he draw the picture that the congregation was wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement. Suddenly the speaker paused, lifted up his voice and sang "All hail the power of Jesus' Name." The effect was startling. The crowd sprang to its feet and sang the entire hymn with a feeling and a power which seemed to swell higher with each succeeding line. This incident I regard as typical of what we shall witness when before the great white throne, we shall join "yonder sacred throng" as they sing the conquests of our King.

12. Make Jesus King

In Advent, 1494, Savonarola preached a course of sermons on Haggai. In the last of the series he announced that it was

the Lord's will to give a new head to the city of Florence; and after keeping his audience long in suspense, he finally declared: "This new head is Jesus Christ; He seeks to become your King!" He then discoursed on the happiness of that city which had no ruler or guide save Christ. "O Florence, then wilt thou be rich with spiritual and temporal wealth; thou wilt achieve the reformation of Rome, of Italy, and of all countries; the wings of thy greatness shall spread over the world."

13. Entire consecration. (vs. 1-9)

That beautiful story of the keys, which one dear child of God has told us, very sweetly brings this truth home to our hearts. He had had a dream, and in his dream Jesus came and knocked at his door. When he opened it there stood his Lord. In surprise and some confusion he exclaimed: "Why, good-morning, dear Master!" And the Master smiled graciously upon him, and said, "I have come to see you." "Why, certainly, Lord, come in." And the Lord came in, and His host, in some agitation, glanced hurriedly at this corner and the other of the room, and to the center table to see that everything that ought not be there was out of sight. Then the Master said to him: "But perhaps, you do not understand—I have come to stay all the time." "Why certainly, dear Lord, I am delighted," replied the man. "Then," said Jesus, "since I have come to stay all the time, I will want to come and go freely, and so I will ask you for the keys to the house." "Certainly, Lord, I will have a duplicate set made at once and turn them over to you," said the man, and so he did.

But as Jesus took the keys and looked at them, He glanced swiftly at His host and said: "Well, I am sorry you cannot trust me—Good-bye!" and He went walking swiftly away. But the man stopped Him and said, "Master, wait. What is it? Why do you leave, dear Master?"

And then Jesus flashed upon him one of those looks such as Peter saw when he denied Him—a look tender and yet terrible, as He said: "These are not all of the keys." "Why, no, Master," said the man, "they are all, except the one key, the little key to my own secret drawer, where I keep my private papers and my personal affairs." "Yes," said Jesus, "that is true, and, as I said, I am sorry you cannot trust me." And again He started walking away. But the man, running to Him once more, said, "Stop, Master! Stop!" and rushing up, he extended his hand and said, "Here, dear Lord, is *the old bunch of keys!*" —*Straton*

The Second Sunday in Advent

Luke 21: 25-36

14. The time of the Second Coming. (v. 27)

The Bible reveals the fact of the second coming of Christ but it declares at the same time that the day and the hour of His advent are hidden from all men. Now here is a horizon distinctly and divinely established, and yet good people have not been able to restrain their curiosity from trying to pass over it. They have counted the numbers in the book of Daniel, and discovered that Napoleon Bonaparte was the man of sin. They have investigated the horns of the various allegorical creatures and the clothing of the scarlet woman in the book of Revelation, and identified the Pope as the antichrist. They have fixed with more or less particularity the date of the millenium, and have assembled in white robes to wait for its arrival—but it failed to arrive, because it is still beyond the horizon.

Of all the activities in which men have employed their intellect, there is none which has produced such a large amount of incorrect information and erroneous discovery, as this habit of pushing beyond the horizon into the secrets of God.

15. He shall come again. (v. 27)

A blasphemous or perhaps it is more merciful to say, foolish painting depicts Napoleon I as rising from his opened grave in full uniform with a wreath of laurel on his forehead and surrounded by a halo. Beneath the painting is the inscription: "He shall come again!" Well, I would not judge Napoleon or anyone else; but this I know, that when his hour of resurrection is at hand, it will not be as an emperor, but as you and I, as a poor sinner, and then only one, will have the crown and sceptre—He, Who will come to judge the quick and the dead.—*Fibiger*

16. God still lives. (v. 26)

When the thunder crashed and the lightning played, elector Johann Friedrich of Saxony was wont joyfully to lift his hand toward the heavens and say: "O Thou ancient and powerful God, Thou livest yet."

17. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away. (v. 33)

In his "Memoirs," Haldane tells of a question which was asked at a literary party: "Supposing all the New Testaments in the

world had been destroyed at the end of the third century, could their contents have been recovered from the writings of the first three centuries?"

Two months later two of the guests met and the talk ran upon this question. They had been thinking seriously upon it. Said one:—

"That question quite accorded with the tune or taste of my antiquarian mind. On returning home as I knew I had all the writings of those centuries I began to collect them and set to work on an arduous task." Pointing to a mass of papers he continued: "There is the result of a busy two months searching for chapters, one-half chapters, and verses of the New Testament. I have marked down what I found and where I found it, so that anyone can examine for himself and see. I have actually discovered the whole of the New Testament except eleven verses, and I am sure I could discover them also."

God has concealed the treasures of His Word in this way.

18. The ineffaceable Word. (v. 33)

On one occasion when William Dawson, the Yorkshire preacher, was giving out a hymn, he suddenly stopped and said: "I was coming once through the town of Leeds, and saw a poor little half-witted lad rubbing at a brass plate, trying to rub out the name; but the poor lad did not know that the harder he rubbed the brighter it shone. Now, friends, sing:—

'Engraved as in eternal brass
The mighty promise shines;
Nor can the powers of darkness rase
Those everlasting lines.'"

Then, as though he saw the devil rubbing, he said: "Satan cannot rub it off—

'His hand hath writ the Sacred Word
With an immortal pen.'"

19 The enduring words. (v. 33)

An infidel in London had a wife who possessed a Bible which she read regularly. Being annoyed at this, the man, who had frequently threatened to do so, threw the book upon the fire. This appears to have taken place at dinner-time. He then left home to go to his work, but soon returned to see if the last vestige of the volume had disappeared. The woman, who naturally felt distressed at her loss, said she thought it must be completely burned; but her husband stirred the ashes to see if

such was the case, when he read what fastened itself upon his mind, and led to his conversion—"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away." The sister of this man was the wife of a London pastor; and just when the Bible was burning she was earnestly praying for her brother's conversion.—*"Sword and Trowel"*

20. Christ's Second Coming. (v. 34)

Plutarch, the great biographer of the classic world, tells us that Lycurgus, the law-giver of Sparta, left behind him no written books but a more impressive monument, "a whole city living together and governing itself philosophically, according to the true rules and precepts of perfect wisdom." And when he had done everything for Sparta he could do, he assembled the princes and senators and people, and made them swear to keep his ordinances without changing anything, until he should return from the oracle of Delphi, whither he was now going. They gave him their promise and he went to Delphi and received from the prophetess the assurance that his city, keeping his laws, should be the most renowned in the world. Then he did not return at all. For five hundred years Sparta waited for him, reverencing his enactments inviolably. And for five hundred years Sparta's honor and glory were paramount throughout Greece.

It is not scientific history, for Plutarch mingles imagination with his narrative. But for us it should be a penetrating parable. When we are Christ's we tarry for a Lord and Law-giver out of sight. He has gone, but He will return. He is not a man, like Lycurgus, to disappoint us. We are to keep His ordinances with constant care.

21. Be ye also ready. (v. 34)

Many of the lamentable failures of life come from not being ready. The firemen in our great cities are always on the alert. The instant the alarm of fire comes in, the harness drops upon the horses, the doors swing open, and the engine is on the way to the scene of the conflagration. Five minutes' delay may mean the loss of thousands of dollars and perhaps of human lives. Where wild beasts are seeking to pounce upon the traveler, he must have his gun loaded. The Prince Imperial of France lost his life in South Africa because he waited a moment after he was warned to fly. His mother is reported to have said that her son's great fault was never being quite ready.—*"The Sunday-School World"*

22. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things. (v. 36)

It was said by those who were in the midst of the terrors of the great earthquake in San Francisco, that the one thing that impressed them most was the slow and ponderous ringing of the church bells. Before the houses began to fall, they were swayed to and fro as by some mighty but unseen hand. There was something weird and strange in the tones of the bells such as no one had ever heard before. And as the bells by the Golden Gate tolled their unearthly message that day over the doomed city, which so often in the past had heard unheedingly their quiet calls to prayer, so the words of the Lord Jesus every year ring out their warning over the whole world. "I am coming," they keep saying. "Though I seem to delay, yet at last I come quickly. Therefore watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is."—*Rev. Walker Gwynne*

23. When He cometh. (v. 36)

Philip Henry, the father of Matthew Henry, the commentator, called upon a tanner, who was so briskly employed in tanning hides that he did not notice the minister's approach. As soon as he looked up he apologized. Philip Henry replied, "Let Christ, when He comes, find me equally well employed in the duties of my calling."—*Hurlbut*

24. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching. (v. 36)

An Arctic explorer found a ship floating helplessly about among the icebergs of that cold, lonely country. Going on board he found that the captain was frozen, and sat dead at his log-book, while the helmsman stood at his post and the men on watch still on duty, but cold in death. What happiness will it be when our Lord doth come to know we have done our duty, and can welcome our Saviour as He bids us "come up higher." "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching." Are you ready? Are you ever watching and waiting the coming of the Lord?

25. A surprise visit. (v. 36)

Christ will not come like a general on the day of a public review, when the day has long been fixed, and every man knows that he must be at his best. He will come as the general does when he pays a surprise visit to his men, to see how things go on when he is not expected. Or, He will come as a friend comes, without an invitation, to a house where he is familiar. He is not expected and no special preparation has been made for him, but he "takes his friends as he finds them."

The Third Sunday in Advent

Matthew 11: 2-10

26. John the Baptist. (v. 2)

At the entrance to New York harbor stands a giant statue casting its light upon the waters of the harbor. It stands at the entrance to the New World. How many hearts have been gladdened at the sight of the Statue of Liberty marking the entrance to the land of hope. It is not itself the harbor, but it is a guide to the ships that enter the harbor.

Thus the giant figure of John the Baptist stands in the history of mankind. Of him the angel said: "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord," and Jesus Himself said of John: "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." He stood midway between the Old Testament and the New. Back of him are the law and the prophets, before him the kingdom of heaven. Himself he was not the One that should come. He was not the Saviour, but he came to testify of the Saviour.—*Skovgaard-Petersen*

27. The Koh-i-noor diamond. (v. 2)

When we read about John does it not seem that God dealt with him as they dealt with the Koh-i-noor diamond in an exhibition many years ago? They had it so adjusted that, at any approach of danger, by touching a spring they could bury it in a safe under the ground. When spiritual perils beset John, God dropped him into a valley of humiliation, under the shadow of His wings, till the calamities were past.

28. John in prison. (v. 2)

God never places us in any position in which we cannot grow. We may fancy that He does. We may fear that we are so impeded by fretting petty cares that we are gaining nothing; but when we are not sending any branches upward, we may be sending roots downward. Perhaps in the time of our humiliation, when everything seems a failure, we are making the best kind of progress.—*E. Prentiss*

29. Christ the dispeller of doubt. (v. 3)

During his earlier life Dr. Merle D'Aubigne, the Swiss historian of the Reformation, was grievously vexed with depressing doubts. He went to his old teacher for help. The shrewd old man refused to answer the young man's perplexities, saying, "Were I to get you rid of these doubts, others would come.

There is a shorter way of destroying them. Let Christ be really to you the Son of God, the Saviour. Do His will. His light will dispel the clouds, and His Spirit will lead you into all truth." The old man was right, and the young D'Aubigne was wise enough to adopt his counsel. He hoisted anchor, and moved out of the region of fogs, and quietly anchored himself under the sunshine of Christ's countenance.—*Dr. Cuyler*

30. Art Thou He that should come? (v. 3)

At the close of a meeting in Southern India a man came to the missionary and said: "What you say is true. In the Hindu religion one can receive no assurance of the forgiveness of sins. I have been in Benares (the holy city of the Hindus), and have visited many other so called holy places and temples, but never have I received satisfaction or been assured of the forgiveness of sins. In that respect our religion has nothing to offer." He then pointed to a temple nearby and said: "It is said that the god who is worshiped there is the God of the world and has created all things. But how can that be? If you were to enter that temple you would immediately be ordered out. It appears then that he is not your God. You, on the other hand, welcome all to your church and you treat all alike. Your God must be the true God and I desire to become a Christian."

31. God's works reveal Him. (v. 4)

Dr. Guthrie tells of an Arab, who was asked by a traveler how he knew that there is a God. Astonished that anyone could doubt that there is a God the Arab, after looking intently on the questioner, countered with this question: "How do I know whether it was a man or a camel that last night passed my tent?"

32. Proved by its work. (v. 4)

In an argument which Dr. George Pentecost once had with an atheist, the latter said the reason why he did not believe in the Bible was because he did not know the author.

The doctor asked him, "My friend, is the multiplication table a work of authority with mathematicians?"

"Most certainly."

"Do you happen to know who the author of the table is?"

"No, I do not."

"Then I presume, as a matter of fact, you never use the multiplication table."

"O yes, it proves its truth by its work."

"Then, my friend," said the doctor, "shall we not also take the Bible as an absolute authority in religion and morals, whether

we know its author or not, because it works well in its own sphere, just as the multiplication table works in its sphere?"

33. Rely on His Word. (vs. 4, 5)

Place your trust in Him and take Him at His word. Once when Emperor Napoleon was reviewing his troops the horse on which he was riding became frightened and ran away. A soldier from the ranks left his place, grasped the bridle and stopped the horse. "Thanks, Captain," said the emperor. "In which regiment?" asked the soldier quickly. "In my guard," replied the emperor and rode away. The soldier laid down his musket and stepped over to a group of staff officers nearby. One of the generals asked bruskly: "What are you doing here?" "I am captain of the guard," replied the soldier quietly. "How can that be? You have no uniform." "He," replied the soldier and pointed to the emperor, "has made me a captain and I rely on his word." The general was silent and bowed respectfully; against the word and will of the emperor he could make no objection. Jesus is King of kings and on His word we can rely. His words are true and His deeds are good.

34. God known by His works. (vs. 4, 5)

It is said of the great Galileo, who had been accused of infidelity, because he asserted that the earth went round the sun, in apparent contradiction to the language of Scripture, that when questioned by the Roman Inquisition as to his belief in God, he pointed to a straw lying on the floor of his dungeon, and said to his accusers, that from the structure of even so insignificant an object as that, he could infer the existence of an intelligent Creator.

35. Men see what they go out to see. (v. 7)

A geologist and a botanist take a walk together. They go over the same country, but the geologist sees the lie of the strata, the botanist sees the wild flower under the hedge. So it is in the world of the moral and the spiritual. What we are spiritually all goes into our vision.—*J. Brierley*

36. Christ praising the Baptist. (v. 9)

Due praise is to be given to the good parts and practices of others; but rather behind their backs than before their faces, lest we be suspected of flattery, than which nothing is more odious. Aristobulus, the historian, wrote a flattering book of the brave acts of Alexander, the Great, and presented it to him. He read it, and then cast it into the river, telling the author that he deserved to be treated as his book was.—*John Trapp*

The Fourth Sunday in Advent

John 1: 19-28

37. Our testimony

How many of us never venture on religious themes with those we love! Mr. Zangwill, the novelist of the Ghetto, tells a striking story of a Jewish girl. "A Christian friend of mine, an artist, fell in love with a girl, and courted her regularly at her house for four years. Then he proposed; she told him to ask her father, and he learned *for the first time* that the family was Jewish, and that his suit could not therefore be entertained. Could a satirist have invented anything further? Whatever it was the Jews have to bear witness to, these people had been bearing witness to so effectually that a constant visitor never heard a word of the evidence during the four years." It is to be feared a similar tale might be told of some Gentiles. For all the witness they bear to their faith in Christ in their conversation it might be non-existent. How different to the prophet's ideal, "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them."—*Mackay*

38. Who art thou? (v. 19)

The botanist, in his rambles along the lanes and among hedgerows, passes by hundreds of flowers without pausing to look at them. A momentary glance is enough. He has seen so many of the same kind before. But now and then he sees a flower which invites his curiosity. He takes his pocket lens, and, with many a keen, scrutinizing gaze he asks: "What are thou? What sayest thou of thyself." This was the principle in which these religious scientists came to John. He did not belong to their schools, and had not been classified in their catalogue of men and professions. In what niche could he be placed? Such a man is an awkward one for classification. He is a class in himself. He cannot be bracketed with others.—*David Davies*

39. "I am not the Christ." (v. 20)

A gentleman heard two distinguished ministers one Sunday. Recording his experience, he said: "In the morning I could not see the Master for the man; in the evening I could not see the man for the Master."—*David Davies*

40. It takes courage to confess Christ. (v. 20)

Canon Ashwell tells this incident about Frederick the Great. At one time one of Frederick's most courageous generals declined the king's invitation because he had planned to receive the Holy Communion the next morning. When present the next time at the royal table the king and his guests began to jest at him for his religious scruples, and to mock at the communion of the Lord's Supper. Few generals would have dared to reprimand Frederick, for it must cost his office or his life. But the old general rose, saluted the terrible king and told him respectfully but heroically that there was a greater King than Frederick, and that he never allowed that Holy One to be insulted in his presence. The guests heard his words with astonishment, fearing that the general would lose his life. But Frederick showed his manhood. Instead of getting angry at this rebuke he grasped the hand of the fearless general and expressed his grief that he could not believe so strongly, or confess his faith so courageously. We may have unbelieving or scoffing friends whose ridicule we fear; we remain silent when they attack Christ or Christianity; but if we had the daring to confess Christ on such occasions or in the presence of such scoffers we might win them to Christ.—*Warren G. Partridge*

41. A voice crying. (v. 23)

When it was suspected that the elevated railroad of New York filled the air with injurious particles of iron, an investigator did not retire to his study and apply mathematics to the impact of wheel and rail. He tied a horse-shoe magnet to a string and dragged it through the gutters of Sixth Avenue, and when he examined his magnet it was covered with particles of iron.

Along the ways of our life there are the accumulated evils and habits oftentimes so concealed that we are unconscious of them. To study them from a theoretical standpoint, or to attempt to account for them on philosophical grounds is not to remove them. We need the magnet of some great life and voice to rouse us to our need and to discover to us the evils which, though so common and injurious, we have passed by unheeding.

42. Make straight the way of the Lord. (v. 23)

A minister is quoted as follows: "I know three ministers who served the same church. The platform of the first could have been expressed in these words: 'Here I am, let me do all I can for you.' And his people let him. He was big bodied, big hearted, sympathetic, enthusiastic, industrious—and he worked for them. He became the bond slave of the congregation. The

platform of the second was: 'Here I am, do all you can for me.' And strange to say they did. They praised him, and bragged about him, and sent him to Europe, and read with unrestrained delight the reports about himself which he regularly sent to the newspapers. The third man said: 'Here is Jesus Christ, do all you can for Him.' And, strange to say, they did. Immediately their vision was enlarged, their evangelistic activities received momentum, their gifts to missions were doubled, and their ideals were changed."

He made that congregation over. He was an ambassador of God. All three succeeded, but only one had the true ideal of success.

43. There standeth One among you, Whom ye know not. (v. 26)

In the annals of earthly sovereigns no legend is more ancient than that of the king in disguise. The Caliph, Haroun-al-Raschid, wanders as a private person through the lanes of Bagdad.

Sir Walter Scott shows us the Crusading monarch, Richard I, riding over his kingdom in disguise as the Black Knight.

Shakespeare represents his ideal hero, Henry V, as listening in disguise to the talk of soldiers on the eve of Agincourt.

44. Bearing the shoes. (v. 27)

The expression used by John the Baptist when contrasting the glory of Christ with his own comparative insignificance, is given with a variation on the closing word. Matthew uses the word *bear*, Mark, Luke and John the word *unloose*. The phrase was probably proverbial, and, we can readily imagine, took some variety of form. Matthew's word has been thus explained: People of rank in Eastern lands had slaves to carry their sandals, which were often very costly articles, sometimes even made of gold. Those not wanted for immediate use were carried, in case of a journey being undertaken, by a slave in a sandalotheka or sandal box; and the office of this slave John declared himself unworthy to perform for the Messiah.

45. I am not worthy. (v. 27)

These words are first used in the Bible by the patriarch Jacob: "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands." (Gen. 32: 10.)

They are spoken by the Roman centurion (Matt. 8:8). "The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed."

The words of St. John the Baptist are four times recorded (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:7; Luke 3:16; John 1:27).

The prodigal son says to his father (Luke 15:21), "I am no more worthy to be called thy son."

46. Whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. (v. 27)

As we read in the Book of Ruth, it was a custom in Israel, that when a relation refused, as it was termed, to redeem an inheritance, that is, when a brother, for example, refused to marry the widow of his brother, and to enter into his property, then he loosed the latchet of his shoe. But our dear Lord came to this very end that He might redeem His inheritance; that He might redeem us whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren; and therefore it was that the latchet of His shoe was not to be unloosed.—*J. M. Neale*

47. The best servant the most humble. (v. 27)

As the lark that soars the highest, builds her nest the lowest; the nightingale that sings the sweetest, sings in the shade when all things rest; the branches that are most laden with ripe fruit, bend lowest; the valleys are fruitful in their lowliness; and the ship most laden sinks deepest in the water, so the holiest Christians are the humblest.—*J. Mason*

Christmas Day

Luke 2: 1-14

48. A legend

There is a legend that at the birth of Jesus Christ everything stopped still; that night birds flying in the air stopped motionless; that the shepherd reaching his crook toward the sheep held it still; that people eating a meal held their hand midway between the dish and the mouth; and that everyone awake had a sudden inclination to be still.

Historically this legend is very far from the truth, for there was almost nothing that the world thought less about, and paid less attention to, than the Babe that was born in the manger. And yet in a deeper sense the fiction was a fact. The world did stop still at the birth of the Child and began its thought and acts anew from the impulse of His life and love. And whatever it has of goodness and greatness today, it has derived from Him.

49. There was no room for them in the inn. (v. 7)

Thou camest from heaven to earth, that we
Might go from earth to heaven with Thee;
And though Thou found'st no welcome here,
Thou didst provide us mansions there.—*Vaughan*

50. The first Christmas. (v. 10)

The message of the angels to the shepherds was the first gospel service ever held. It was a small audience, but a ready one, and the preaching was done by a host of heavenly beings. The sermon was short and very much to the point. The choir was the finest ever heard. The result of the service was one to be desired for every gospel service, for the shepherds went at once to seek Christ.

51. A night message. (v. 10)

We are all familiar with the night message telegram in which we may send fifty words for the day rate cost of ten. And we all know the great mass of telegrams and cablegrams and radiograms of news, important and otherwise, which is served up in the daily morning papers. So while the world sleeps the telegraph instrument clicks and the messengers of the night go out as agents of joy or sorrow, hope or despair, to the hearts of humanity's millions.

But the greatest night message in the history of the world was a telegram from heaven containing exactly fifty-eight words. It was delivered by an angel messenger to some shepherds on

the Judean hills, nineteen centuries ago. And this was the message: "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you, Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

52. The Black Death. (v. 11)

I have seen a most interesting story of the Black Death. In the year 1353 one of the greatest pestilences recorded in history had swept over every country in Europe, claiming its dead by unnumbered thousands. Men fled in terror from their fellow men, in awful fear of their breath or touch, and for weeks sustained a strange, weird seige in solitude. In their terrible fear men became like wild beasts, refusing even the cup of cold water and the simplest service through dread of contamination.

So it continued until Christmas Eve, when one man in Goldberg, believing himself to be the only inhabitant of the city left alive, unbarred his door at dead of night, and went forth into the air. He knew that it was Christmas, and as he recalled other Christmases, with their sacred joys and festivities, he lifted up his voice in a song:

"To us this day is born a child,
God with us!
His mother is a virgin mild,
God with us!
God with us! Against us who dare be?"

As he sang, through a barred door came another voice in response to his own, and then the door was flung wide, and a man joined him in the street and sang with him. Together they marched through the town, giving it its first audible sound save wails and cries of terror since the plague descended upon it.

The song woke strange echoes. From their living tombs men, women and children came forth to the number of twenty-five: all that were left of the town; and marching through the death-stricken streets, they sang with new courage: "God with us! Against us who dare be?"

Whether it was that the plague had spent its violence, or, which is most probable, that the minds of the survivors were more serene, none of this little band died of the Black Death. They returned to their homes, buried their dead, and the town began to awake. The incident was remembered, and for centuries the town continued to meet each Christmas Eve at midnight, and at two o'clock march through the streets singing in triumph: "God with us! Against us who dare be?"

53. Ye shall find a babe lying in a manger. (v. 12)

A godly man one day went out to find a hostler, to whom he wished to speak regarding the welfare of his soul. He came upon him in the stable and immediately began to present his errand. "Oh!" said another hostler who had overheard the conversation, "a stable is not the place to talk about religious matters." The man of God answered: "That is just where Christianity began. Did you not know that it began in a stable? Jesus Christ was born in a stable, and it is not impossible for Him to be born again in a stable."

He then calmly went on speaking to his young friend, and God gave His blessing so that at the close of the conversation the young man knelt with his friend and accepted Christ as his Saviour.

54. A Christmas motto. (v. 14)

"With malice toward none, with charity for all." This truly Christian motto of President Lincoln, sounds almost like an earthly echo of the heavenly anthem, and certainly proves its power and influence in the history of the world.—*P. Schaff*

55. The Christmas gift of peace. (v. 14)

A Christmas gift to which all men of good-will are looking with desire is peace, peace among the nations and the neighborly peace that makes for happy homes and good relations everywhere. And peace is coming; we have the word of Christ for that, although our eyes may be closed before it fully comes. But in the meantime we may strengthen our patience and endeavors by noting signs of hope as they appear.—*"Congregationalist"*

56. And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child. (v. 17)

A little shoeblack in London went regularly to religious meetings. Once he attended on Christmas eve. What he heard there gripped his heart and he resolved to serve the Lord from that time on. Early on Christmas Day he stood at his post. He called to a passerby, who to all appearances had spent the night carousing: "Shine, Mister?" The young man looked at his muddy boots and murmured flushing: "Yes, if I have enough money. They surely need it." The shoeblack immediately dropped to his knees and looking up at the man said: "Please, Mister, may I shine them without pay?" "Why do you want to do that?" The shoeblack stammered, embarrassed: "It is cold, I have had nothing to do, and I would like to get warm."

When the work was done, the young man asked the boy:

"Now, why did you do that?" "Because this is Jesus' birthday," the boy answered bravely, "and I want to do something for Him. Yesterday at the meeting it was said: When we do a kind deed to someone, we do it to the Saviour!"

"Oh!" jeered the man, "have they wound you around their fingers, those old ——?" The boy's eyes filled with tears; when the man noticed it he stopped short, lifted his hat and said: "Forgive me for saying that about your friends."

Many years passed by. One Christmas Day, a business man of high standing sat in church with his wife and children and listened to the sermon of a man, who related that he had been led to belief in the genuineness of the Christian religion by a little shoeblack. The business man was the former shoeblack.

57. They made known concerning the saying. (v. 17)

Good news ought to be told to those whom it most concerns. A cure for disease ought to be shown to the sick. A way of escape ought to be pointed out to the imperiled. Water ought not to be hidden from the famishing. Food ought not to be concealed from the hungry. Salvation for the lost belongs to the lost. He who knows of it has a duty to make it known to others. It is as much our duty to tell the good tidings of a Saviour for the lost, as it was the duty of the Bethlehem shepherds. And the world's need is now as real as it was then.—*"Sunday School Times"*

58. But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. (v. 19)

Dr. Wilbur Chapman relates: "When we were in Minneapolis a prominent business man was cordially invited to our meetings. The more he was pressed to come, the more unwilling he seemed to be. One evening, however, he stopped for a moment at the door of the meeting place and heard only this one phrase out of the whole sermon: 'Accept Him now!' Thereupon he turned about and went home. From that time on he had nothing unfriendly to say about pious people. At first he said nothing about the change that had come about, but all his friends noticed it. That was in October. When Christmas came he gathered his wife and children around him: 'I wish to give you the best Christmas gift that I have ever given you.' Then he placed his arm around his wife and said: 'I wish to present you with a believing husband? Then, with the other arm around his children, one of the greatest merchants in Minneapolis began to pray and finally broke down sobbing. From that day to this he has lived a sincere Christian life. What he had heard at that door he had pondered in his heart, and he became obedient to this voice."

The First Sunday after Christmas

Luke 2: 33-40

59. The Last Sunday of the Year

In the year 1842 a great fire raged in the city of Hamburg. Among other buildings the old St. Nicholas church stood in flames. Soon the great steeple was at the point of falling. The heat of the flames set in motion the machinery of the chimes which always played at noonday. Above the roar of the flames sounded forth from the steeple the music of: "Praise be to God in the Highest." Then the steeple fell with a crash.

The year in these latter days is like that falling steeple. It is drawing to a close. This is the last Sunday. Should not also we sing: "Praise be to God in the highest"? Should we not thank God for the blessings of the past year and especially for the blessings of the Christmas festival which we have just celebrated?

60. An aged servant of the Lord. (vs. 34, 35)

At the close of a long and arduous career the famous Lyman Beecher passed under a mental cloud. The great man became as a little child. One day after his son, Henry Ward, had preached a striking sermon, his father entered the pulpit and beginning to speak wandered in his words. With great tenderness the preacher laid his hand upon his father's shoulder and said to the audience: "My father is like a man who, having long dwelt in an old house, has made preparations for entering a new and larger home. Anticipating a speedy removal, he sent on beforehand much of his soul-furniture. When later the day of removal was postponed the interval seemed so brief as to render it unnecessary to bring back his mental goods." O, beautiful words describing those whose strength is declining, whose spirit is ebbing and senses failing, because God is packing up their soul-furniture that they may be ready for the long journey that awaits us all.

61. A sign that shall be spoken against. (v. 34)

If the Lord did not place these thorns under our head we would sleep on and miss the glory of heaven.

62. Simeon. (v. 34)

I am a watcher whose eyes have grown dim
With looking for a star which breaks on Him
Altered and worn and weak and full of tears.—*Browning*

63. Mary. (v. 34)

Those of you who have seen Holman Hunt's "Shadow of the Cross" will remember how Mary is employed when she gets the first awful premonition of what her Child's fate is to be. She is engaged, so the painter fancies her, looking into a coffer, where the gifts of the wise men are preserved, feasting her eyes on the beautiful crowns and bracelets and jewels, so prophetic, as she thinks of what her Son's after-destiny is to be. And then she turns and what a contrast! There, in shadow on the wall, imprinted by the western light, she sees her Son stretched on a cross! What a sight for a mother to see! As she looks, the solemn, mysterious words of Simeon flash through her heart: "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul." Against that awful destiny her mother's heart rises up in arms, and it was, I believe, this love, this misguided love, that led her to seek to keep back her Child from His mission and point Him into a path of glory, not of shame; of royalty, not of sacrifice; of a crown, not of a cross.

64. Christ reveals hearts. (v. 35)

An eastern fable tells of a magic mirror that remained clear and unsullied when the pure-hearted looked into it, but became troubled and obscure when the glance of the guilty fell upon it. So the owner of that mirror could always tell the character of those who looked into it. Such a test we have in Jesus. We can tell a man's nature by knowing what he thinks of Christ, and thus "the thoughts of many hearts" are "revealed."—*"Sunday School Times"*

65. Departed not from the temple. (v. 37)

"Why do we go to church when God is everywhere present?" asked a wise man. A wiser one answered: "My friend, there is water in the air all about us, but he who wishes a drink of it must go to the well."—*Weigel*

66. Departed not from the temple. (v. 37)

"I know everything that the pastor preaches about," said a man when he was urged to go to church. "I know how bread tastes," was the answer, "nevertheless, I must eat it time and again."

67. Honor the aged

An old anecdote of Napoleon records that, while walking along a country road attended by some officers, he encountered a

peasant, an old man, laden with faggots of fuel. The old man was about to be jostled aside, as a matter of course, by his social superiors, when the Emperor, laying his hand on the arm of the foremost member of his escort, arrested the whole party, and gave the laboring man the use of the road, with the remark, "Messieurs, respect the burden."

68. Old and New Year

A strange scene was witnessed by an English visitor at Odessa on the first day of one Jewish year. Sixty thousand Jews living at Odessa went down to the sea for the purpose of throwing last year's sins therein, to begin the New Year with a clear conscience. They stood in groups closely packed together, looking toward the water, reciting prayers. Some of the people turned their pockets inside out and shook them towards the sea; others merely made a sign of throwing stones into it. This was a public act of confession and contrition. Whether or not it was followed by a better life would depend on how much of sincere penitence there was in the act.

69. Time closing in upon us

There is a story of a prisoner in a cell with contractile walls. Day by day his space lessens; he saw the whole of that window yesterday, he sees only half of it today. Nearer and nearer the walls are drawn together, till they meet and crush him between them. So the walls of time are closing in upon us.—*Maclaren*

70. End of time

There was an ancient custom of putting an hour-glass into the coffin of the dead to signify that their time had run out, a useless notification to them. Better put the hour-glass into the hand of every living man and show them the grains gliding steadily out. Soon all will be gone.—*Foster's "Cyclopedia"*

New Year's Day

Luke 2: 21

71. The circumcision and naming of the Child. (v. 21)

Boys were circumcised eight days after their birth. Tradition said that this day was chosen because the mother ceased to be unclean on the seventh day if she had borne a boy. He who circumcised the child used the following words: "Blessed be the Lord our God, who has sanctified us by His precepts, and given us circumcision." The father of the child continued: "Who has sanctified us by His precepts, and has granted us to introduce our child into the covenant of Abraham our father." The child was named the same day, because it was said that God changed the names of Abraham and Sarah when He gave the covenant of circumcision.—*E. Stapfer*

72. Early suffering. (v. 21)

Thus early did Jesus suffer pain for our sakes, to teach us the spiritual circumcision, the circumcision of all our bodily senses. As the east catches at sunset the colours of the west, so Bethlehem is a prelude to Calvary, and even the Infant's cradle is tinged with a crimson reflection from the Redeemer's cross.—*Archdeacon Farrar*

73. Jesus. (v. 21)

Stradivarius at Cremona marked every violin he made with the Name of Jesus.

74. Jesus. (v. 21)

It is said, that after one of the sermons of St. Bernardino of Sienna, delivered in the great square of Santa Croce in Florence, the listeners commemorated it by erecting a monument on the spot, and inscribing on it the single name, JESUS.

75. Name of Jesus. (v. 21)

It is related of San Bernardino, that, when preaching, he was accustomed to hold in his hand a tablet on which was carved, within a circle of golden rays, the name of Jesus. A certain man, who had gained his living by the manufacture of cards and dice, went to him, and represented to him, that in consequence of the reformation of manners, gambling had gone out

of fashion, and he was reduced to beggary. The saint desired him to exercise his ingenuity in carving tablets of the same kind as that which he held in his hand, and to sell them to the people. A peculiar sanctity was soon attached to these memorials; the desire to possess them became general; and the man, who, by the manufacture of gaming cards could scarcely keep himself above want, by the fabrication of these tablets realized a fortune.—*Mrs. Jameson*

76. The power of Jesus' Name. (v. 21)

A little while ago I was called to visit a dying man. I saw immediately on entering the room that he was very sick. The wife went near him and said: "John, the minister is come. Do ye ken him?" But his eyes were lightless and his face expressionless. His daughter then went to him and said: "Faither, do ye ken me? I'm yer ain wee dochter, Jeanie." But there was no response. The wife was now filled with peculiar sadness, and going to him again she said: "John, John, do ye ken me? John, speak to me, I'm yer ain wee wifey." Still there was no response. Then I went close to him, and in a calm, clear voice, adopting their own method of speech, I said, "John, do ye ken Jesus?" Instantly his face and eyes were illumined with almost heavenly light, and with strength which seemed to be divinely given, he said, "Oh, I ken Him weel. He's my ain Saviour." I knelt by his side, took his hand in mine and prayed. For a time I felt the grasp of his hand in response to my prayers; then his hand was still; and when I had ceased praying, I looked into his face and he was gone. He had gone to see "his ain Saviour" face to face.—*MacArthur*

77. The New Year

When an ancient king sent his young son, Comfortas, out to see his realm, he left the boy to fight his own battles and win his own spurs, and yet, although the young prince did not know it, the great king saw to it that certain knights of unequalled strength and bravery went in advance of their prince, followed him and were not far away from his tent when night fell and dangers were near. Let us travel across this year, guided with the mighty thought that God is with us and is fully equal to our every emergency.—*Hillis*

78. Time is short

One of the most impressive pieces of modern sculpture is to be seen in the city of Chicago. It was born of the genius and

chisel of Lorado Taft, and is entitled, "The Fountain of Time." It is a powerful sermon in marble and will set the dullest mind to do some active thinking. It shows the mighty, craglike figure of Father Time, shrouded in a long mantle leaning on his staff, and watching with cynical gaze the endless march of humanity before him. In that hurrying throng are seen the pauper and the prince, the scholar and the boor, the monarch and the slave, the wealthy and the poor, anxious men, beautiful women and little children. Every now and then a strong man turns and facing that austere figure, cries like the gladiators of old, "Hail Cæsar, we who are about to die salute thee!" and then presses on, for the time is short.

79. Prayerful beginning

Victoria was aroused at midnight and informed that she was Queen of England. She asked her informer to pray, and they knelt down in prayer together. Thus began the prosperous reign of England's worthy queen.

80. Our years

A story is handed down to us from the time of the founding of Rome. A woman from a far-away land suddenly appeared before Tarquin, the chief of state, and offered to sell him nine books of wisdom for a great sum. When Tarquin refused her price she burned three of the books, and yet demanded the same sum as before for the other six. He ridiculed the idea of having to pay as much for the six as had been asked for nine, whereupon she burned three more, and asked again the same price for the remaining books she had asked for all. And as the woman was a Sybil or prophetess, and the books were needful for the right guidance of the state, the king at last consented, and paid for a portion the same sum for which he might have purchased all. Our years are like those books. God lays them before us, and asks that we give Him our hearts for them. As long as we refuse the years are wasted and gone. Don't let this be another year lost.

81. Days

We are always complaining our days are few, and acting as if there were no end of them.—*Addison*

82. Dodging the future

Dodging the future in this world, is a success equal to that of the old woman who triumphantly announced that she had borrowed enough money to pay all her debts.

83. Live today

Upon the pulpit of the Metropolitan Church at Washington lies the Bible from which John Wesley read his text to crowds and mobs, and in later years to more orderly congregations. It was printed in 1655, and is still in a good state of preservation. Upon the fly-leaf, in Mr. Wesley's handwriting, are the words, "Live today." Suggestive words; good to start out with on this new year.

84. A little new wood each year

When Longfellow was well along in years he was asked how it was that he was able to keep so vigorous and write so beautifully. His reply was to point to a blooming apple tree nearby and say: "That apple tree is very old, but I never saw prettier blossoms upon it than those which it now bears. The tree grows a little new wood every year, and I suppose it is out of that new wood that those blossoms come. Like the apple tree I try to grow a little new wood each year." Try it yourself as the new year begins.

85. The challenge of time

A fine story is told of General Foch. During the war one of his generals in charge of a division was being sorely pressed by the Germans. He sent word at last to General Foch that the forces could no longer hold the line. Foch replied with this message, "If you can no longer hold the line then advance." The New Year spreads out before us nearly four hundred days, and each day will come to us like a purse with twenty-four golden coins inside, hours to use with diligence, persistence, and constant vigilance. Make your life a challenge, not a truce! Accept the challenge of time, and conquer it!

The Second Sunday after Christmas

Matthew 2: 13-23

86. The angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream. (v. 13)

In a mining village in England a woman saw in a dream how the cable of the cage, in which the miners descended into the mine, suddenly rose. This dream made such an impression on her that early in the morning she ran to the shaft to warn the men. They at first ridiculed her, but finally decided to test the cage with a heavy stone, in order to please her. Immediately the cable rose and the cage went crashing into the depths. The miners saw the hand of God in their escape.

87. The flight into Egypt. (v. 14)

Jesus, who carried on the work of Moses and at the same time demolished the work of Moses, goes back over the route taken by the first redeemer. When the Jews were under the whip of the Egyptians, slaves, oppressed, mistreated, ill-used, the shepherd of Midian made himself the shepherd of Israel, and led his hard-headed people across the desert till they were in sight of the Jordan and of the miraculous vineyards. The people of Jesus left Chaldea with Abraham and came with Joseph into Egypt. Moses led them from Egypt toward Canaan. Now the greatest of the liberators, in danger of his life, went back to the banks of that river where the first saviour had been saved from the water and had saved his brothers.—*Giovanni Papini*

88. Out of Egypt have I called My Son. (v. 15)

When man's spirit, whether through a Divine leading or through some strong natural impulse, is quickened out of ignorance, apathy, and unbelief into intelligence, sympathy, and love, "Out of Egypt God has called His Son."—*Dora Greenwell*

89. Herod sent forth and slew all the children. (v. 16)

During the great earthquake in 1907, which destroyed a large part of San Francisco, a little child was found safe in its cradle under a huge mass of fallen bricks, which had formed a sort of triumphal arch over the cradle. Nearby lay the family Bible opened to the 23rd Psalm: "The Lord is my Shepherd;

I shall not want. . . . . Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

90. Penalty of murder. (v. 16)

Thales Milesius, one of the wise men of Greece, being asked what was the most difficult thing in life, answered, "For a tyrant to live to old age." The application may be extended to the cruel, bloodthirsty, and murderers.

91. The Innocents. (v. 16)

Nobody ever knew how many children were sacrificed to the terror of Herod. It was not the first time in Judea that even nursing children had been put to the sword. These same Hebrew people had punished in the olden times cities of their enemies by the massacre of old men, the wives, the young men and boys. They saved only virgins to make them slaves and concubines. God Himself, the jealous Jehovah, had often given the order for slaughter, and now the Idumean applied to the people who had accepted him, the Mosaic law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

We do not know how many of the Innocents there were, but if we can believe Macrobius we know that among them was a little son of Herod who was at nurse in Bethlehem. For the old king, wife-killer and son-killer, who knows but that this was a form of retribution: who knows but that he suffered when they brought him news of the mistake? A short time after this he also was to die, suffering from loathsome disease. His body began to putrefy while still alive. Worms consumed his organs. Burnt up with fevers, gasping, he could scarcely draw his tainted breath. Disgusting to himself, he tried to kill himself with a knife at table, and finally died, after having given Salome orders to have many young prisoners killed. —*Giovanni Papini*

92. Then Herod slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under. (v. 16)

The economy of heaven is dark,
And wisest clerks have missed the mark,
Why human buds like this should fall,
More brief than fly ephemeral.—*C. Lamb*

93. (v. 16)

For thou hast ta'en thine innocence on high,
The child-simplicity of thy stainless years;
And on thy brows we see the diadem
Of those who walk with Christ in purity,
Fair souls, and wept, like thee, with lifelong tears,
Sword-slain in Ephratean Bethlehem.—*F. T. Palgrave*

94. When Herod was dead. (v. 19)

Many years ago a Sultan of Turkey decreed that all Christian missionaries should be banished on an appointed day. The Christians gathered together in earnest prayer, and one of them said: "The great Sultan of the universe can change all this." And He did. The Sultan died on the very day that he had appointed for the banishment of the missionaries, and they were then permitted to remain.

95. Being warned of God in a dream. (v. 22)

A devout captain dreamed one night at sea that the crew of a ship was in great need. Immediately upon awakening he gave orders, to the great astonishment of his men, that the course of the ship should be changed. They thought he had lost his reason, but he kept to the changed course hour after hour until finally he came upon the shipwrecked men of whom he had dreamed and saved them all, and brought them safely into the port of New York.

96. A city called Nazareth. (v. 23)

Dr. F. Godet wrote from Beyrut in 1872 that the first sight of Nazareth was for him one of the two most charming views of Palestine. "The gracious beauty of the place corresponded so perfectly to its memories! It was here that Jesus spent thirty years of His life, His childhood, His youth; it was here that He learned to know men and the world; these are the hills that were continually before His eyes."

97. Cruelty. (v. 16)

Do we think enough of the social advantages of our day and thank God for them? In former times lunatics were chained and put in cages like wild beasts. Lepers were banished from towns, and made to live in some remote quarter as if they were not human beings. In the middle ages, in some parts, like living corpses, they wandered forth, closely wrapped up from head to foot, carrying in their hands what was called the Laz-

arus rattle, with which they gave notice of their approach, that everyone might get out of their way. Galley slaves were made to tug at the oar until they expired from exhaustion. Criminals were crowded together without regard to age or sex, till the prisons of Europe became the very sink of iniquity. Four hundred years ago criminals were given over to be vivisected by the surgeons of Florence and Pisa; and what shall we say of the unutterable horrors of the slave trade and the days of the persecutions of the Jews and the Christians, and of all the fiendish cruelties of Paganism. Cruelty is a growing passion, perhaps from two causes: the cruel man feels that his victim hates him, hence he determines to punish all the more, for the very hatred he has himself created; there is also an excitement in cruelty which goads the cruel man on, like a fire burning fiercer and fiercer in his heart.

The Epiphany of Our Lord

Matthew 2: 1-12

98. The wise men of the East. (v. 1)

In the annals of China there is historical evidence that ambassadors or "wise men" were sent towards the West in search of the "Great Saint who was to appear."

99. An Armenian myth. (v. 1)

It was an old Armenian myth, said Hawker of Morwenstow, that the wise men of the East were the three sons of Noah, and that they were raised from the dead to represent, and do homage for, all mankind in the cave at Bethlehem! He wrote the following carol on this tradition:

Three ancient men in Bethlehem's cave
With awful wonder stand:
A voice had called them from their grave
In some far Eastern land.

They lived, they trod the former earth,
When the old waters swelled;
The ark, that womb of second birth
Their house and lineage held.

Pale Japhet bows the knee with gold,
Bright Shem sweet incense brings,
And Cham the myrrh his fingers hold:
Lo, the three Orient kings!

100. The Magi. (v. 1)

From time immemorial they have been regarded as kings:

We three kings of Orient are,
Bearing gifts, we traverse afar
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.

In the cathedral at Cologne there is a golden reliquary in which are preserved, in the odour of sanctity, the relics of these men. A visitor said to the venerable monk in attendance, "Do you really believe that these are the relics of the wise men?" "Oh yes," he replied, "there is no question whatever as to their genuineness; we know their names: Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. The Venerable Bede tells all about them."

101. Then came wise men from the East. (v. 1)

Wise men from afar are still seeking that cradle. All the great religions of the earth are really feeling for Christ. The consummation of all deep thought and aspiration is in Him. And, although often unknowingly, all the sovereign thinkers do Him reverence. The greatest of men have in successive generations made that cradle the shrine of their sincerest worship. In the corn-fields the heaviest heads bow most, and the mightiest intellects have done the Master lowliest reverence. All the ground is strewn with the tokens of their homage,—sublime poems, harps and organs, deep philosophies, eloquent orations, rich sculpture, delightful pictures, magnificent architecture, dedicated to His praise and glory. Genius brings its choicest products to His feet, and thinks them poor.

102. The King of the Jews. (v. 2)

Erasmus thought that the Magi did not adore Christ with Divine worship (as not knowing that He was God) but only with the homage which was due to Him whom they acknowledged as the "King of the Jews." But the Fathers generally teach otherwise.

103. Keep sight of the star. (v. 2)

No one who has read Ben Hur will ever forget that matchless opening, the account of the journey of the Wise Men to Bethlehem. At one time they lose sight of the star, but again it flames out before them and they cry with one voice, "The star! God is with us!" In the spirit of that scene we may be very sure that God will be with us during the coming year if we can keep with us the Christmas star and what it signifies.

104. A boy who followed the star of right. (v. 9)

When Whitefield (the great preacher) went to America (he went five times), he stood on the steps of the courthouse in Philadelphia, and preached to the people; and there was amongst the crowd a little boy. The little boy saw that Mr. George Whitefield could not see to read his Bible very well, so he got his lantern, and lit it, and held the lantern for Mr. Whitefield to see to read by. Mr. Whitefield was very much obliged to him. The little boy listened with all his might and main to Mr. Whitefield's preaching. He listened so much, that he let the lantern tumble down, and it was broken all to pieces. Many years afterwards Mr. Whitefield came back again to

America, on his fifth journey. He stopped at the house of a minister, who said to him one day: "Do you remember, sir, preaching once in Philadelphia, and a little boy, who was holding the lantern, dropped it, and broke it?" "That I do," said Mr. Whitefield, "and I would give anything in the world to know what has become of that little boy." The minister said, "I was the little boy, sir. I held the lantern. I listened to you. I let it drop. Your preaching made me what I am, a Christian minister." He "followed the star."—*J. Vaughan*

105. Gold, frankincense and myrrh. (v. 11)

Our gold is a pure heart, our frankincense is prayer, and our myrrh is whatever we have to suffer in our lives.

106. Give the best you have to Jesus. (v. 11)

It matters not how poor the offering be, if it is the best you can give. A legend tells us how once a little boy in church had no money to place among the offerings on the altar, so he gave a rosy apple, the only gift he had to offer. Presently, when the priest removed the alms from the altar, he found there an apple of pure gold. The simplest gift is in the eyes of God as pure as gold.—*H. J. Wilmot Buxton*

107. They presented unto Him gifts. (v. 11)

The mediæval interpretation of the offered gold as signifying recognition of His kingship, the frankincense of His deity, and the myrrh of His death, is so beautiful that one would fain wish it true. But it cannot pretend to be more than a fancy. We are on surer ground when we see in the gifts the choicest products of the land of the Magi, and learn the lesson that the true recognition of Christ will ever be attended by the spontaneous surrender to Him of our best.

108. Missions

A rich man was down on the waterfront watching the departure of a great ocean liner. He was walking up and down the dock with a rather complacent air. He was joined by an acquaintance, who said to him, "You seem to be much pleased about something." "Yes," said the rich man, "I do feel unusually good today. Do you see that vessel just dropping out into the North River? Well I have on that vessel $10,000 worth of equipment for a hospital in China. I made that gift at the instance of a missionary friend. I am greatly pleased

that I had the privilege of doing that, and I just came down to see the vessel safely off." And then the friend said to him, "Well, that is interesting, and I am glad you made that gift! But," he said, "You know I also have a gift on that ship. My only daughter is on the vessel, going to China as a foreign missionary." And the rich man stopped and looked swiftly into his friend's eyes and then exclaimed, "Why, man! I haven't given anything, have I?"—*Straton*

109. God is moving His men

In Indo-China a queer sight is to be seen. Worshipers gather at a Buddhist temple. A space is prepared and arranged almost exactly as a chess-board. Each square is about two by two feet. On one side sit the girls in their best attire, a girl occupying every square; on the other side boys arranged in same fashion. At either end a throne is erected, upon which are seated a king and queen, clothed in gorgeous robes. Two old men each with a wand direct the game and when a move is made the boy or girl as the case might be, is tapped lightly on the head with the wand, upon which he or she picks up his stool and changes place with the opposing "piece." The crowd lines the area ten by twenty deep and the betting is brisk. A human game of chess.

Today God is "moving his men." He has moved us into this land and we cover squares from north to south. This is splendid but there is something we count still better. Young men are being moved into the place of preparation for His service. Some have moved out into the big squares where the harvest is immense. God's great game is going on, and it is yours too in faith, till we see Satan checkmated in heathen lands.

110. A practical speech

At a laymen's meeting of Southern Baptists, held in Richmond, Mr. R. E. Breit, President of a Texas oil company, was called upon for an address. He said: "Brethren, I never made a speech in my life and I can't make one now; but if Brother Willingham (secretary of the missionary society) will send ten men to China he can send the bill to me."

The First Sunday after the Epiphany

Luke 2: 41-52

111. Went to Jerusalem every year. (v. 41)

The way to Jerusalem was long but for the parents of Jesus it led to the house of God. In Albany, in Northwest Canada, lived a widow, ten miles from the mission station, on the farther side of the Albany River. Nevertheless, each Sunday found her with her children on the way to the mission station, no matter what the weather was. She carried the youngest child on her back. She would not under any circumstances miss the Sunday gathering.

112. To parents. (v. 43)

Take this child and nurse it for ME, and I will give thee thy wages, is the inscription which God's hand writes on the cradle. When you dress your child each morning pray that Jesus would clothe him with purity. When you bathe him pray that His blood will cleanse his young soul from evil. When you feed him pray that his young heart may be washed by truth and may grow into likeness with the youthful Jesus of Nazareth.

113. If he were my boy. (vs. 44, 45)

Horace Mann, the celebrated educationalist, at the opening of a reformatory school built at great cost in the city of Boston, Massachusetts, made the statement that all the money would be well expended if only one boy were to be saved thereby. Someone asked him afterwards if his statement was not an exaggeration, and his prompt reply was: "Certainly not, if it were *my* boy." What a difference that little word would make in us all if we only remembered that every man in the world is *our* brother.

114. Children in the Temple of God. (v. 46)

I know of a boy, who, at fourteen years of age, walked a series of miles from his home, to a strange place, to see a synodical convention. He started out in the morning, and returned at night, without partaking of a meal during his absence, and repeated the same on the day following. And from what he saw and heard during those two days, there was formed

in his heart the purpose to devote himself to the gospel ministry. That purpose he also carried into effect, against the dissuasion of his bishop, the disapprobation of his father, and all the disadvantages of the absence of pecuniary resources. That contact with the assembled ministers of the Church brought about by no particular object save to gratify a general desire for information, and without having spoken a word to any of them, touched a cord, and awoke a feeling, which gave shape and direction to his whole after life. And that boy is your preacher today! Nor can you know what living seeds of transforming power, and fruitfulness in virtue and grace, may be planted by a single visit of a youth to the temple of God! See to it, then, that your children are early brought into connection with all the ministrations of the sanctuary.—*J. A. Seiss*

115. They found Him in the Temple. (v. 46)

A woman in India lost her daughter. The last she saw her she was playing with a group of little girls. Finally she found her near the place where they had been in company with her playmates on the flat roof of a building. "What are you doing here?" the mother demanded. "We are all praying to Jesus," was the astounding reply that the heathen mother received from her little girl.

116. And asking them questions. (v. 46)

A little ragged, dirty girl came into a Sunday school, went up to the superintendent and asked: "Mister, is this the way to heaven?" The question so amazed the superintendent that for the moment he could not find an answer. Yes, the Sunday school should show the children the way to heaven. But had it been the way hitherto? The unexpected, innocent question caused the superintendent and the teachers of that Sunday school from that time on to show the children the way to heaven with greater earnestness.

117. Were amazed at his understanding and his answers. (v. 47)

In a village in Sweden there was school inspection. The school inspector, among other questions, asked: "Is there anything that God cannot see?" "No," was the unanimous answer of the children. But little Theodore was not quite convinced. "Well, my boy," asked the examiner, "is there anything in the world that God cannot see?" "Yes," answered the little boy.

The examiner looked at the teachers in a dissatisfied manner, but the boy continued: "He cannot see my sins, for they are cleansed in the blood of Jesus."

The eyes of the examiner now filled with tears and he coughed in his embarrassment. He felt that Theodore was right.

118. A Mother's solicitude. (v. 48)

The parents of Robert Moffat were pious, and his mother's heart was set upon his "knowing from a child the Holy Scriptures." When about to leave Inverkeithing, in Fifeshire, where he was in service in the Earl of Moray's gardens, for a situation in Cheshire, she earnestly besought him to promise, before going, that he would read the Bible every day, morning and evening. Sensible of his own weakness, and of, perhaps, his boyish disinclination, he parried the question. But at the last moment she pressed his hand. "Robert," she said, imploringly, "you *will* promise me to read the Bible, more particularly the New Testament, and most especially the Gospels. Those are the words of Christ Himself; and then you cannot possibly go astray." There was no refusing then; it was the melting hour. "Yes, mother," he answered, "I make you the promise." He knew, as he remarked in relating the circumstances, "that the promise, once made, must be kept. And oh," he added, "I am happy that I did make it!"—*"Hand and Heart"*

119. Busy. (v. 49)

I have read a little fable about a hard frost. When everything was frozen there was one little stream running still. It was not frozen, and somebody said to the little stream, "Little stream, why aren't you frozen?" The reply was, "I am too busy to be frozen. I am going too quickly to be frozen." The best way is to be very busy, have plenty to do.—*J. Vaughan*

120. I must be about My Father's business. (v. 49)

You know the story of Alexander, that when the Persian ambassadors came to his father's court, little Alexander asked them many questions, but they were not at all such as boys generally think of. He did not ask them to describe to him the throne of ivory, nor the hanging gardens of Babylon, nor anything as to the gorgeous apparel of the king; but he asked what weapons the Persians used in battle, in what form they marched, and how far it was to their country; for the boy Alexander felt the man Alexander within him, and he had

presentiments that he was the man who would conquer Persia, and show them another way of fighting that would make them turn their backs before him. It is a singular parallel to the case of the Christ Jesus, who is taken up with nothing but what is His Father's; because it was for Him to do His Father's work, and to live for His Father's glory, and to execute His Father's purpose even to the last.—*C. H. Spurgeon*

121. Attending to God's business. (v. 49)

Dr. Parr, in his "Life of Archbishop Ussher," relates that while that prelate was once preaching in the church at Covent Garden, a message arrived from the Court that the king wished immediately to see him. He descended from the pulpit, listened to the command, and told the messenger that he was then, as he saw, employed in God's business, but as soon as he had done he would attend upon the king to understand his pleasure; and then continued his sermon.—*Baxendale's "Anecdotes"*

122. Early instruction of children. (v. 51)

When a lady once told her pastor that she would not give her children religious instruction until they had attained the years of discretion, the shrewd pastor replied: "Madame, if you do not teach them, the devil will."

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany

John 2: 1-11

123. Christ at a wedding. (v. 2)

You nowhere read of His being at a funeral. Why? Because marriage belongs to the primeval order of creation, but funerals do not. Marriage is a part of the original program of the universe, but death is an intrusion. He, therefore, went to a marriage to vindicate the Divine order. He did not attend funerals because they are incursions upon that order. He was the Everlasting Life, and consequently could not join in the procession of death. Indeed, each time He met death in His sojourn through the world, He could not but grapple with him and compel him to give up his prey.—*J. C. Jones*

124. Jesus was invited. (v. 2)

A Japanese wrote home from New York: "What do you suppose is the most wonderful thing I have seen in America? The Palace Hotel, the greatest in America? or the Union Pacific Railway? The Rocky Mountains? or the great bridge across East River? The immense wealth of the New York merchants? No. Then what? Christian family life."

125. Jesus was invited. (v. 2)

When Sir Thomas Abney was Lord Mayor of London, the time for family devotions happened to come just as he was in attendance at a banquet. He asked to be excused, saying that he had an engagement with a very intimate friend. He went to his home and gathered his family about him in prayer.

126. What have I to do with thee? (v. 4)

When the mother of an officer tried to tell him what to do in the performance of his duty in the service, he replied: "I stand under the orders of the king."

127. Woman, what have I to do with thee? (v. 4)

Many find it difficult to reconcile these words with the Master's gentleness and goodness. Was He angry or did He mean to show disrespect to His mother? Certainly not!

Many and varied are the interpretations of this passage and most of them rest on a misconception of the facts. This somewhat impersonal form of address to a woman is very common in the East. According to the Oriental manner of speech it is dignified and in good taste. In speaking to the woman of Canaan Jesus said: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt!" To the woman who had a "spirit of infirmity" He said: "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." In His conversation with the Samaritan woman Jesus said: "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father, etc."

Why then does Jesus speak to His mother as He would speak to a woman who was a stranger to Him? He speaks as a *divine* being to a *human* being and says: "Woman, leave me alone." The words literally mean: "Woman, what is to me and to thee?" or "What is mine and what is thine?" Stated in simplest terms the Oriental understanding of these words is: "Leave me alone." Mary's vision of spiritual things was not Jesus' vision and she was not competent to exercise authority over Him. In a higher spiritual sense she was a stranger to Him.

128. Instant obedience. (v. 5)

Archias, the magistrate of Thebes, was sitting with many mighty men drinking wine. A messenger came in bringing him a letter, informing him of a conspiracy against his life and warning him to flee. Archias took the letter, but, instead of opening it, put it into his pocket, and said to the messenger who brought it: "Business tomorrow." The next day he died. Before he opened the letter the government was captured. When he read the letter it was too late. I put into the hand of every man and woman here a message of life. It says: "Today, if ye will, hear His voice; harden not your hearts." Do not put away the message and say: "This business tomorrow." This night thy soul may be required of thee.

129. Prompt obedience. (v. 5)

A story is told of a great captain, who, after a battle, was talking over the events of the day with his officers. He asked them who had done the best that day. Some spoke of one man who had fought very bravely, and some of another. "No," he said, "you are all mistaken. The best man in the field today was a soldier who was just lifting up his arm to strike an enemy, but, when he heard the trumpet sound a retreat, checked

himself, dropped his arm without striking the blow. That perfect and ready obedience to the will of his general is the noblest thing that has been done today."—*Pulpit Treasury*

130. Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. (v. 5)

Fire broke out in a school and when the alarm sounded the children rushed to the door in wild haste. The fire was soon extinguished but several of the children were seriously hurt in the panic. When quiet had again been restored the teacher asked a little girl, who had remained in her seat during the excitement, why she did not rush out with the others. The little girl replied: "My father is a fireman and he has told me whenever a fire breaks out during school-time to remain quietly in my place. I was terribly frightened, but I knew that it was best to do as father said and so I remained in my seat."

131. Whatsoever he saith unto you. (v. 5)

Wellington used to say that no man was fitted to become a commander who had not himself learned to obey.

132. Whatsoever he saith unto you. (v. 5)

A negro preacher once said, "Bredren, whateber de good God tell me to do in dis blessed Book, dat I'm gwine to do. If I see in it dat I must jump troo a stone wall, I'm gwine to jump at it. Going *troo* it belongs to God; jumping *at* it 'longs to me."

133. Whatsoever he saith unto you. (v. 5)

A missionary doctor at Shanghai was lying one night in his bed fast asleep, when he was awakened by a loud knocking at his front door. Even Chinese grown men are very much afraid of the dark, so he was very much surprised to see two little lads from a village five miles distant standing at his door. They said their school teacher had been taken ill, and they had come for some medicine to help him. "Why didn't some men come on this errand?" the missionary asked. "Because they were afraid," said the boys. "Why were you not afraid?" "We were," said the boys, "but we thought it was what Jesus Christ would like us to do, so we came."

134. Water that was made wine. (v. 9)

A prize was offered in England for the best treatment of the Gospel texts and many theologians wrote learned treatises. The

prize was given to a man who sent in only one line, which read: "The water beheld its God and blushed."

135. He manifested forth His glory. (v. 11)

Moses changed water into blood in order to command belief in his mission. Christ changed water into wine in order to arouse faith. Moses perished; Christ became an eternal blessing.—*Casper*

136. Religion for joy as well as for sorrow

Religion is just as necessary for prosperity as for adversity. There is no happiness so happy but His presence can make it happier; and they who seek to have Him at their bridals can count more confidently on Him in their sufferings and at their death beds.—*J. A. Seiss*

The Third Sunday after the Epiphany

Matthew 8: 1-13

137. Suffering is as old as the race. (v. 2)

Explorers opened an Egyptian tomb which had been closed for 2,000 years. There stood the exquisitely carved coffin of a little child, and over it this inscription: "Oh, my life, my love, my little one! Would God I had died for thee!" Instinctively the men uncovered their heads, and with dim eyes stepped silently out into the light. They replaced and sealed the door, and left love and death to their eternal vigil. How old is love? How old is sorrow? Old as the human heart. Old as God.

138. Secret leprosy. (v. 2)

I have seen a fair and well-built house, lifting its head proudly above its neighbors, and having a goodly outside presence. And I have looked within, and found that the dry rot had eaten away rafter and beam, and that the house was ready to fall to ruin. During the Crimean War, our ships suffered far more from the dry rot within their timbers, than from the outside attacks of shot and shell. How many lives there are like that grand house, or those stately ships! Outside they are fair to look upon, men envy their wealth, or position, or good fortune, and all the while the foul leprosy is within, eating away the moral nature, making that life a ruin.—*Wilmot Buxton*

139. "He stretched forth His hand and touched him." (v. 3)

Some rude children in Madagascar were one day calling out, "A leper! A leper!" to a poor woman who had lost all her fingers and toes by the dread disease. A missionary lady who was nearby, put her hand on the woman's shoulder and asked her to sit down on the grass by her. The woman fell sobbing, overcome by emotion, and cried out: "A human hand has touched me. For seven years no one has touched me!" The missionary lady says that at that moment it flashed across her mind why it is recorded in the gospels that Jesus touched the lepers. That is just what others would not do. It was the touch of sympathy as well as healing power.—*"Mission Workers"*

140. "And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him saying, I will; be thou clean." (v. 3)

A Chinese convert relates the following: "A man had fallen into a deep, dark pit, and lay in its miry bottom, groaning, and unable to move. Confucius walked by; nearing the edge of the

pit, he said to the poor, unfortunate man: "Poor fellow, I am exceedingly sorry for you. Why were you such a fool as to get into this awful place? Now, take the advice of a friend, and when you get out, don't go near such a place again!" Next came a Buddhist priest, and said: "Poor fellow, indeed, I am sorry for you. I think if you could scramble up part of the way, I could help you out." But the man could do nothing to help himself. Next came the adorable Jesus, and, hearing loud cries, went to the pit, stretched down His long arm, and rescued the prisoner, saying: "Go and sin no more." Such is the love and compassion of the beloved Son of God, and for such a cause came He into the world, to rescue those that were deep sunken into the pit of sin and iniquity, and it matters not how deep the pit may be, He is able, and His great arm is long enough to reach to the bottom. All the sinner has to do is to ask to be raised, and Jesus is moved with compassion, and lifts him up, and sets his feet on the solid rock, and cleanses him from all sin. Could you, dear reader, could I, could lost humanity ask more?

141. Healing qualities. (v. 3)

There is a plant in Central America which has very remarkable healing qualities in cases of poisoning. The leaves, roots, stems, in fact, all parts of the plant, are an infallible antidote against the bites of all poisonous insects and reptiles. Bites of the most venomous snakes are absolutely harmless with this plant at hand. The native Guatemalan never travels without carrying a small sack of the roots of this plant. Thus equipped, he is never molested by insects or reptiles of any sort. There is a plant in the spiritual world which is a certain remedy for the poison of sin. Christ is the Plant and is a Tree of Life to everyone that will lay hold upon Him.

142. Healing for the soul. (v. 3)

When anyone is threatened by cancer, he will have his arm or his leg cut off to save his life. If a tumor grows in the bowels, he will let his body be cut open to save his life. We are concerned to save the body and keep it in health. But how about the soul, without which the body is only a machine of flesh and blood? Men will grudge almost any sacrifice to keep the soul in health.

143. The Divine Word enough. (v. 13)

When William, Prince of Orange, was invited to come to England and be king, he promised certain offices to his friends,

and he gave them written pledges. But when he offered such a pledge to the man who was to be his Lord Chamberlain, that nobleman replied, "Your Majesty's word is sufficient. I would not serve a king if I could not trust in his word." That saying pleased the king, and he who showed such faith in him became his favorite minister. Should we not be willing to take the word of the King of kings?

144. Adversity. (v. 1-13)

A German baron had a deep ravine near his castle, and thought to make a huge Aeolian harp out of it. He stretched wires across it. In the gentle breeze it was silent, but when great storms blew down the ravine the air was filled with music. —*R. R. Meredith*

145. Adversity. (v. 1-13)

A flower has been discovered in South America which is only visible when the wind blows. It is of the species cactus, and when the wind blows, a number of beautiful flowers protrude from the little lumps on the stalks. So, beautiful lives are developed by adversity.

146. Adversity. (v. 1-13)

Stars may be seen from the bottom of a deep well when they cannot be discerned from the top of a mountain. So are many things learned in adversity which the prosperous man dreams not of.—*Spurgeon*

147. Adversity. (v. 1-13)

It was not until Beethoven had become so deaf he could not hear the fortissimo of a full orchestra that he composed his chief oratorio. It was not until John Milton had become stone blind that he could dictate the sublimest poem of the ages. It was not until Walter Scott was kicked by a horse and confined to the house for many days that he could write the "Lay of the Last Minstrel." That painter who mixes his colors with blood from his own broken heart makes the best pictures. The mightiest men of all ages have been mightiest in their agonies. —*Talmage*

The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

Matthew 8: 23-27

148. Ship. (v. 23)

There is no lake, no sea to compare with Gennesaret; for it bore the ship of Christ, the shell in which the costly pearl of heaven and earth beamed in all its brilliancy.

149. The unsinkable ship. (v. 23)

At the time of the sinking of the *Titanic,* one of our great American preachers was in Belfast, Ireland. The *Titanic* had been built in Belfast, and there was a great local pride over the mighty ship. She had been heralded far and wide as "the unsinkable ship." Sixteen members of one church in Belfast, all skilled mechanics, went down with her. The mayor said that Belfast had never been in such grief as that which came over this terrible tragedy. When the news finally was verified that the gallant ship was certainly lost, so deep was the grief that it is said strong men upon the streets, grasped each other's hands, burst into tears, and parted without a word. The visiting American preached the Sunday after the tragedy in the church to which the sixteen members who had been lost belonged. Not only was the building packed with people, but on the pulpit were lords, bishops and ministers of all denominations. In the audience many new-made widows were sitting, and orphans were sobbing on every side. The great preacher took as his subject, "The Unsinkable Ship." But he did not apply that term to the *Titanic,* which on her first voyage had gone out into the Atlantic, crashed into an iceberg, carrying her precious cargo of human lives down into a watery death. No; the preacher's message was about that other "unsinkable ship," the frail boat on the Sea of Galilee, unsinkable because the Master of land and sea was asleep upon a pillow in the after part of the vessel. Thank God, He still lives and rides the billows and controls the storms, and when the children of men take their only true Pilot back on board, we will ride out the present storms and He will bring the vessel through to the fair harbor of our hopes.—*Straton*

150. He was asleep. (v. 24)

Our Lord understood the Hebrew, in which language one writes backwards, the last first, suffering first, then glory.

151. Lord, save us. (v. 25)

When the experienced educator, Salzmann, lacked money for his educational institution he visited his friend, Gotha. In the living room of his friend's home he came upon a book and opening it he found the following entry: "Do not depend upon men, but upon the help of God." He left the home of his friend greatly comforted and on the same day the mail brought him a considerable sum of money to use for his institution.

152. The impotence of man. (v. 25)

The great king of the Persians, Xerxes, wanted to cross the Hellespont on one occasion, but the waves crushed his boat. In his anger he commanded that the waves be lashed with rods of iron.

When a storm hindered the proud Wallenstein from getting his fleet over to the coasts of Sweden he commanded that red hot cannon balls be shot into the Baltic.

How powerless the fury of man against the forces of nature. But Jesus simply stands up in the boat and speaks to the wind and the waves, and there is great calm.

153. Caesar in the ship. (v. 26)

One of the greatest of the old Romans was once overtaken by a storm at sea, and when the captain of the ship was full of terror, the conqueror said, "Why do you fear for the ship? Do you not know that it carries Cæsar?" Let us, as Christians, remember that the ship in which we must cross the waves of this troublesome world, is the ship of the Church, and that it carries Jesus.

154. Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. (v. 26)

One of the most tragic events of recent days was when nearly two score lives on a Japanese vessel went down to death in an angry sea. Down to death they went, while two ocean liners stood by helpless and could only send the hopeless message, "Rescue impossible!" No boats could be launched, no lines could be passed, and the oil which was poured on the angry waves simply mocked the sailors who discharged it. No invention of man has ever been able to curb the wrath of the sea, but the Master simply "rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm."

155. A man destitute of fear. (v. 26)

A simple but characteristic incident is recorded in connection with the early history of Lord Nelson. On one occasion his mother was telling him that he should fear a certain thing, and not go near to it; he at once turned round to her, and asked, "Mother, what is fear?" It was a question which shows how true it is that the boy is father to the man; for if ever there was a character of dauntless intrepidity it was he. Now it is evident that there was no need for the disciples to have asked such a question; what fear was they well knew, and it was for giving way to it that they were now gently rebuked by our Lord. To us also He addresses the same words, for He would have each of us to say with the Church of old, "I will trust, and not be afraid;" and, among many other instances, the present case is intended, and peculiarly adapted, to strengthen the one feeling, and to remove the other.

156. The authority of God's Word. (v. 27)

An anecdote is told of General Ethan Allen, the hero of Ticonderoga. One Sunday he listened to a certain preacher who was expounding plainly and fearlessly some Christian truth. The sentiment evidently did not meet with the soldier's approval, and General Allen rose in his seat and interrupted the speaker. The minister stopped his sermon, and said kindly but firmly, "General Allen, you are a man of imperious disposition, born to command. You also usually have a good opinion upon social or political subjects, but you, as well as others, must remember that when we come to God's Word we are not considering human opinion. The truth is not changed by our belief or doubt. General Allen, sit down and listen to what God says." There is a great need in our modern preaching of this spirit of authority. In all Christian teaching, let us hear the admonition: "Preach the preaching that I bid thee."

157. Spiritual resources and power

In one of the tidal rivers near New York, the building of a bridge was interrupted by a derelict sunk in the river's bottom. Divers put chains about the obstacle and all day long the engineer directed the maneuvering of tugs as they puffed and pulled in vain endeavor to dislodge the hulk. Then a young student, fresh from the technical school, asked for the privilege of trying, and from the vexed impatient chief obtained his wish. "What will *you* do with it?" the engineer inquired. "The flatboats in which we brought the granite from Vermont," the

young man answered. So when the tide was out, the flat-boats were fastened to the derelict. The Atlantic began to come in; its mighty shoulders underneath the boats lifted, lifted until the derelict had to come. The youth had harnessed infinite energy to his task. To the consciousness of such resource in the spiritual world Christ has introduced His people.

158. Peace, be still

When Jesus spoke to the winds and waves of Galilee, He taught the world for all times that no winds or waves on any sea at any time ever subsided or should subside, but somewhere His voice commanded: "Peace, be still." A little handful of disciples heard Him say it on the sea of Galilee. But the fishermen dwelling about the shores of the little sea heard no voice. They only knew that the storm had abated. Let us all realize that He who is the same yesterday, today and forever controls now as then.

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The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

Matthew 13: 24-30

159. Wheat and tares. (vs. 24, 25)

The tare (zewan) is a grain which when ground with the wheat and eaten causes dizziness and nausea, a state much like seasickness. For this reason this plant is hated by the Syrians, although they use tares very extensively as chicken feed. Wheat merchants are likely to sell wheat mixed with tares in hard times, because they can buy it for less money than pure wheat. I do not believe there is a family among the common people of Syria which has not suffered at one time or another from "tare-sickness." Having tasted the gall of this affliction a few times myself, I do not at all wonder at the Syrians' belief that tares must have come into the world by the devil. And what I still remember with both amusement and sympathy are the heart-felt, withering imprecations which the afflicted ones always showered upon the seller of the "tare wheat." When the food had taken real effect and the staggering, nauseated members of a family felt compelled to allow nature to take its course, the gasps and groans punctuated the ejaculations, "May God destroy his home!" "May the gold turn into dust in his hands!" "May he spend the price of what he sold us at the funerals of his children!"—and so forth.—*Rihbany, "The Syrian Christ"*

160. Good seed. (v. 24)

It is related of Thorwaldsen that he returned to his home city with a wonderful marble statue which he had fashioned in Italy and which had been very carefully packed in straw and grass. There at home the statue was very carefully unpacked, and removed from its casing, and the packing material carelessly strewn about. The following summer flowers from the gardens of Rome grew in Copenhagen from the seeds, which unnoticed had been transplanted from the sunny south. In like manner is the Word of God effective.

161. His enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat. (v. 25)

When Aaron Burr was a student in Princeton College he at one time became earnestly concerned about the welfare of his soul, and came almost to the point of seeking forgiveness and peace at the throne of grace. But, alas, he happened to meet with a clergyman who did not believe in conversion. "What

you have heard at the university is only exaggeration," he said. Aaron Burr threw aside all the godly impressions he had received and began a life which is known in all America by its dissoluteness and godlessness. He offended the entire Christian world.

162. Sowing tares. (v. 25)

When I visited the Paris Exposition in 1868, I saw a picture with a little piece of paper underneath it on which were the words, "Sowing tares." It was the picture of a man with the most hellish-looking countenance I ever beheld. It seemed the face of a very fiend. He had a basket in his hand which held seed, and every time a seed went down from his hand, up came a serpent, crawling and twisting all over him, and away off in the distance, among the trees, were all kinds of wild beasts. The picture fastened itself upon my mind. "Sowing tares." My friends, if you sow tares you'll have to reap them. Do you think those libertines, those gamblers, those rum-sellers, who are ruining others, who are striking men down to death, do you think they are going into heaven without being regenerated? No, my friends, they are sowing tares, and they must reap them.—*Moody*

163. Sowing tares. (v. 25)

Strange as it may appear, this was by no means unfrequent in the East. Roberts says: "This is still literally done in the East. See that lurking villain, watching for the time when his neighbour shall plough his field; he carefully marks the period when the work has been finished, and goes the night following, and casts in what the natives call pandinellu, that is pig paddy; this, being of rapid growth, springs up before the good seed, and scatters itself before the other can be reaped, so that the poor owner of the field will be years before he can get rid of this troublesome weed. But there is another noisome plant, called perum-pirandi, which is more destructive to vegetation than any other plant. Has a man purchased a field out of the hands of another? The offended says, "I will plant the perum-pirandi in his grounds."

164. Let both grow together until the harvest. (v. 30)

It is God's way to let "both grow together." Here are lessons of patience and of charity. If God can wait, His servants can. If the Master of the harvest can bear with the tares, His children need not be anxious about them. The wheat and the

tares in their early growth are alike; the best farmer cannot distinguish them. God sees the difference; men cannot, but "the day will declare it." There is no tareless wheat field, there is no pure Church on earth. The tares will not always be hidden, but when God's sickle is thrust in they will be given to the fire. The wheat will all be gathered in due time; not one of God's children will be lost. When we see the tares, let us be patient; we would have cast Judas out long before Jesus did. He may try the faith, the charity, and the patience of His people now, by leaving Judas in the Church, as He did then.

Be charitable. What you think to be tares may be God's wheat. What if they walk not with us? They may be for us. Bear with human frailty and sin; you also are frail and sinful. It is safe to leave the results with God.—*H. H. Jessup*

165. Let both grow together. (v. 30)

The world in all doth but two nations bear,
The good, the bad, and these mixed everywhere.—*Marvell*

166. Eternity will be the harvest of today

We can sow for a good harvest, or we can do like the Sioux Indians, who, once, when sent a supply of grain for sowing, ate it up. Men are constantly sacrificing their eternal future to the passing enjoyment of the present moment.

The Transfiguration of Our Lord

Matthew 17: 1-9

167. The Transfiguration. (vs. 1-9)

In the Vatican at Rome hangs Raphael's picture, "The Transfiguration." Some art connoisseurs have criticized it on the ground that it has two centers of interest. In the upper part, our Lord is pictured in His transfiguration glory. On either hand stand Moses and Elijah, and Peter, James and John are kneeling in adoration before them. In the lower half of the canvas the valley is pictured, with the demoniac boy torn by the devils, his father with distress written upon his face, and *the other disciples are pointing him upward to Christ.* The art criticism shows a lack of spiritual understanding, for Raphael rightly conceived of the mountain height experience and the valley service as one incident. There is in the picture, therefore, a profound unity, and it is perhaps the greatest canvas ever painted by mortal genius. Its spiritual lesson is comforting and true. We must not be satisfied with small achievements, but we can at least find encouragement in the fact that the valley of life has its mission. There is a service that each one may render. There is an influence that the humblest may exert.—*Straton*

168. Copying the likeness of Jesus

Raphael's painting of "The Transfiguration" is a wonderful production of art. Modern painters often reproduce it. The artist goes to the hall in the Vatican at Rome, where the painting hangs on the wall. He takes a position and studies it from that point of view. Then he changes his position and scans it from another angle. He studies it from various points of observation and in every possible light. The longer he studies the Saviour's glorified form and features, as presented in the matchless painting, the greater becomes his admiration. Long and carefully does he examine the face, the hands, the feet, and the garments, until soul and mind are all ablaze with the beauty and the glory of the masterpiece of the renowned artist. Inspired with the spirit of the great original he at last mixes his colors, takes his brush, and begins to paint. A long look and then a stroke; another long look and then another stroke. And thus days and weeks pass in patient labor. The features are

faithfully copied. The very expression reappears, and in due time, under the magic touch of toiling and consecrated genius, the canvas glows and breathes. Thus patiently are we to copy the likeness of our ever blessed Saviour. The Gospels present to us a life-like image of Him, of His life and character. Great is the task set before us, but we must not become discouraged. We are to persevere in this important work day by day until we shall be, at last, just like Jesus.

169. His face did shine as the sun and his raiment was white as the light. (v. 2)

If a thing reflects no light, it is black; if it reflects part of the rays, it is indigo or red; but, if it reflects them all, it is white. If we are like Christ, we shall seek, not to absorb, but to reflect the light which falls upon us from heaven upon others; and thus we shall become pure and spotless; for this is the meaning of the "white robes," which the saints wear in glory.—*Beecher*

170. The influence of prayer on the face. (Luke 9: 28)

Gambold, in a letter written while Wesley was in Georgia, tells us that Wesley at Oxford was always cheerful, but never arrogant. By strict watchfulness he beat down the impetuosity of his nature into a childlike simplicity. His piety was nourished by continual communion with God, for he thought prayer to be his greatest duty; and often did Gambold see him come out of his closet of devotion with a serenity of countenance that was next to shining.

171. Nothing but Jesus. (v. 8)

A Spanish artist was employed to paint a representation of "The Last Supper." It was his ambition to throw all the sublimity of his art into the figure and countenance of the Master; but he put on the table in the foreground some chased cups, the workmanship of which was exceedingly beautiful; and when his friends came to see the picture on the easel, everyone was constrained to exclaim, "What lovely cups!" "Ah," said he, "I have made a mistake; these cups divert the eyes of the spectator from the Master, to whom I wished to direct the attention of the observer." He then took his brush, and deliberately painted them off the canvas; for he was determined that "Jesus only" should be the center of attraction and admiration.

172. Transforming power of Christ

At Curzo, Peru, there was formerly a famous temple dedicated to the worship of the sun. The temple was remarkable in that it had only three walls and no roof. It was open toward the east. There was a wall on the north, one on the south, another on the west, and the western wall was covered on the inside with burnished gold. It was the custom of the worshipers to gather in the early morning and kneel devoutly in the temple, waiting for the dawning of the day. At last the sun would rise in splendor over the mountains, lifting the miasmic mists, driving back the hazy darkness, and spreading across the valley, until his radiant light fell upon the burnished gold of the temple wall; and from there, as the worshipers knelt in hushed and devout reverence, the bright beams would be reflected onto their faces until they were all transformed. As we kneel before the Christ, some way, by the subtle workings of God's Holy Spirit, the vision which we catch transforms us into something of the same image.—*Straton*

Septuagesima Sunday

Matthew 20: 1-16

173. He went out about the third hour. (v. 3)

When I would bring to a friend a pleasant gift from my garden I do not wait until the rose has shed its leaves, and pluck the remainder for that friend. I give it to him while it is in its highest state of freshness and beauty. And would you bring to God, who is the greatest, the dearest, the noblest, the best of friends, your soul, after the blossom of youth had dropped, and you had come into years of decay? Do you say, "I am surrounded by many pleasures which stand in the way of my receiving and acting upon your advice?" There is no pleasure which any self-respecting person should wish to indulge in that is not heightened by the love of God. There is no resplendent imagination, no trait of genius, that is not rendered more blessed in the service of God than outside of it.—*Beecher*

174. Go ye also into the vineyard. (v. 4)

"Are you not wearying for the heavenly rest?" said Whitefield to an old minister. "No, certainly not!" he replied. "Why not?" was the surprised rejoinder. "Why, my good brother," said the aged saint, "if you were to send your servant into the fields, to do a certain portion of work for you, and promised to give him rest and refreshment in the evening, what would you say if you found him languid and discontented in the middle of the day, and murmuring, 'Would to God it were evening?' Would you not bid him be up and doing, and finish his work, and then go home, and enjoy the promised rest? Just so does God require of you and me that, instead of looking for Saturday night, we do our day's work in the day."—*Spurgeon*

175. Go, work. (v. 4)

When God wanted sponges and oysters, He made them, and put one on a rock and the other in the mud. When He made man He did not make him to be a sponge or an oyster; He made him with feet, and hands, and head, and heart, and vital blood and a place to use them, and said to him, "Go, work!" And the man that does not go and work is not a man in the end; while the man that puts the vigor and enthusiasm which God inspires into the life that now is, becomes a man indeed.—*Henry Ward Beecher*

176. Idlers in the market place. (v. 6)

Morier in his book of travels gives an illustration of this parable.

The most conspicuous building in Hamadan is the Mesjid Jumah, a large mosque now falling into decay, and before it a maiden or square, which serves as a market-place. Here we observed, every morning before the sun rose, that a numerous band of peasants were collected with spades in their hands, waiting, as they informed us, to be hired for the day to work in the surrounding fields. This custom, which I have never seen in any other part of Asia, forcibly struck me as a most happy illustration of our Saviour's parable of the laborers in the vineyard in the twentieth chapter of Matthew, particularly when passing by the same place late in the day, we still found others standing idle, and remembered His words, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" as most applicable to their situation; for in putting the very same question to them, they answered us "Because no man hath hired us."

177. Proverbs on idleness. (v. 6)

Evil thoughts intrude in an unemployed mind as naturally as worms are generated in a stagnant pool. No pains, no gains. No sweat, no sweet. No mill, no meal. An idle brain is the devil's workshop. He that would eat the kernel, must crack the nut.

178. Work for all in God's vineyard. (v. 6)

A good minister, now in heaven, once preached to his congregation a powerful sermon, founded upon the words, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" The sermon did good to many, among whom was a lady who went to the minister the next day, and said, "Doctor, I want a spade." We should be happy to put spades into the hands of all our idle friends. There are Sunday school spades, mission room spades, tract distribution spades, sick visitation spades, etc., etc. Who will apply for them?

179. Working and rusting. (v. 7)

Two ploughshares were once made by the same blacksmith, in the same smithy, from the same kind of iron, and they were bought by the same farmer. He took them home; one he took into instant employment, but he left the other unemployed for twelve months in a barn, till the poor thing got covered with rust. At last the farmer had occasion for another ploughshare, so he drew it forth from its laziness and obscurity, and sent it

into the field, where it met its old fellow ploughshare. "Why," said the lazy one, "what has kept you so bright? I declare I am quite ashamed to be seen." "Ah!" said the bright ploughshare, "it is labor and exercise that has kept me bright. Your rest and idleness has been injurious to you; but when you have been driven a few times through the earth, you will lose your rust and become beautiful and bright too."—*Blind Amos*

180. God Himself the best reward. (v. 12)

Beautiful exceedingly in this connection is the story, mythical no doubt in form, but probably true in substance, that is told concerning Thomas Aquinas. Worshiping one day in the chapel in which he was accustomed to perform his devotions, it is said that the Saviour thus addressed him: "Thomas, thou hast written much and well concerning Me. What reward shall I give thee for thy work?" Whereupon he answered, *"Nihil nisi te, Domine,"*—"Nothing but Thyself, Lord!" And in very deed He is Himself the best of all His gifts. He is Himself the "exceeding great reward" of all His people. Let the spirit of the angelic Doctor, as enshrined in this simple story, fill our hearts, and there will be no room within us for the hireling's selfishness.—*W. M. Taylor*

181. Diversity of reward imaged in nature. (v. 14)

I suppose we have all noticed the curious diversity of the seeds we sow in the spring. There are some that shoot out and grow up days before the others from the same paper, sown in the same bed, and that seemed exactly like the rest. It is so with a number of fruit trees in a young orchard. Each tree may get an equal care, and appear to have the same natural advantages, but one will spring out into an early fruitfulness while another holds back, summer after summer, and perhaps only when the husbandman begins to despair of its ever doing any good, it bears fruit.—*R. Collyer*

182. Similarity of reward not equality. (v. 14)

So, then, we do the work without any reference to the reward. You who came to Christ full fifty years ago will have your penny—as will the dying thief that had to bring yesternight only one foot out of hell. Will you, then, be placed on equal terms? It never can be so. Can a man of fine capacity and mind go along any road and have as the result of his walking only that which the common clodhopper has, who "thought the moon no bigger than his father's shield, and the visual line

that girt him round the world extreme?" Have they both equal enjoyment out of the same circumstances? It is impossible. The walk to the philosopher is a walk in church, a climbing up the altar stairs. He sees angels, he hears voices, he is touched by reverences, he is in the presence and sanctuary of God. Yet the road the same, the day the same, the road through a garden, the day the queenliest in all the summer train, yet in that walk one man found heaven, the other only a convenient road to a place to sleep in.—*Dr. Parker*

183. Reward given during work as well as after it is done. (v. 14)

I think the most heart-whole man I ever knew, was a man who had waited and watched, breaking stones through all weathers on the cold shoulder of a Yorkshire hill, and he could hardly see the stones he had to break, he was so sand blind. His wife was dead and all his children; his hut was open to the sky, and to the steel-cold stars in winter; but when once one said to comfort him, "Brother, you will soon be in heaven!" he cried out in his rapture, "I have been there this ten years!" And so when at last the angel came to take him, he was not unclothed, but clothed upon; mortality was swallowed up of life.—*R. Collyer*

184. Order reversed. (v. 16)

Leslie, the painter, tells of his hearing the preference expressed by Rogers for seats in churches without pews, opposed by a gentleman who preferred pews, and said, "If there were seats only, I might find myself sitting by my coachman." Rogers replied, "And perhaps you may be glad to find yourself beside him in the next world."—*F. Jacox*

Sexagesima Sunday

Luke 8: 4-15

185. Sowing the seed of the Word. (v. 5)

Billy Dawson, that great natural orator, had a wonderful sermon on the "Sower and the Seed." With every stroke of the hand in imitation of the act of sowing, the speaker would drop some blessed passage of Scripture. The Methodist chapel in one of the midland counties not being big enough, the use of the Particular Baptist Chapel was secured. The minister of the chapel was upon the platform. Dawson gave this "sowing speech," and went along the platform scattering the seed and giving one passage of Scripture after another: "God so loved the world;" "Come unto Me, all ye that labor;" then there came another handful; "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "There, it's out," he said, "and you can do what you like." When remonstrated with for this breach of ministerial propriety he said: "I did not think about the chapel, nor the parson; I thought about the seed."—*"Handbook to Scripture Doctrines"*

186. Some fell by the wayside. (v. 5)

A farmer's helper came home from church one Sunday morning and during the noonday meal told how wonderfully the pastor had preached. The farmer, who had been unable to attend the service, asked: "What text did the pastor have?"

"I have forgotten," the man replied.

"How did he close his sermon?"

"I did not hear the close of the sermon because I had to leave before it was ended."

"Well, what was the main trend of the sermon?"

"I cannot say," answered the helper, "because I was so tired that I did not hear it all."

187. And some fell among the thorns: and the thorns sprang up, and choked them. (v. 7)

For this the Syrian farmer himself is largely to blame. He preserves the thorns for cattle feed and for fuel. Certain kinds of thorns are used as fuel for summer cooking, which is done out-of-doors, and for baking. Other thorns are harvested, after the barley and wheat harvests, threshed, and stored for winter feed. In the sixth verse of the seventh chapter of the book

of Ecclesiastes the writer says, "For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool."

188. Meditation renders good impressions lasting. (v. 8)

Gotthold had for some purpose taken from a cupboard a vial of rosewater, and, after using it, inconsiderately left it unstopped. Observing it some time after, he found that all the strength and sweetness of the perfume had evaporated. Here, thought he with himself, is a striking emblem of a heart fond of the world and open to the impression of outward objects. What good does it do to take such a heart to the house of God, and there fill it with the precious essence of the roses of paradise which are the truths of Scripture? What good to kindle in it a glow of devotion, if we afterwards neglect to close the outlet? —by which I mean, to keep the Word in an honest and good heart. How vain to hear much, but to retain little, and to practise less. How vain to experience within us sacred and holy emotions, unless we are afterwards careful to close the heart by diligent reflection and prayer, and so keep it unspotted from the world. Neglect this, and the strength and spirit of devotion evaporates and leaves only a lifeless form behind.—*Scriver*

189. What we hear. (v. 8)

Two young men went to New York. One of them told about hearing low concert songs, Bowery slang, the roar of the elevated trains, and the latest political gossip. The other came back telling how he had heard Paderewski, Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman, Jacob Riis, and the birds in the aviary at Central Park. If we are in a listening attitude toward God, we shall hear, every day, inward voices that will lead us into larger paths, and make our lives strong and successful.

190. A right attitude essential to perceiving God's truths. (v. 8)

An Eastern legend relates that somewhere in the deserts of Arabia there stood a mass of jagged rock, the surface of which was seamed and scarred by the elements; but whenever anyone came to the rock in the *right way* he saw a door shape itself in the sides of the barren stone, through which he could enter in, and find a store of rich and precious treasures, which he could carry away with him. There are some things in God's universe that seem as barren and unattractive as bare and fissured rocks, but which contain an inwardness of warmth and sweetness inconceivable. The inner holies of God are fast concealed from those who will not come aright, with a heart of love and trust, but open to all who are willing to see and hear.—*"Christian Age"*

191. Take heed how ye hear. (v. 8)

There are four different kinds of hearers of the word: Those like a *sponge,* that suck up good and bad together, and let both run out immediately; those like a *sand-glass,* that let what enters in at one ear pass out at the other, hearing without thinking; those like a *strainer,* letting go the good, and retaining the bad; and those like a *sieve,* letting go the chaff and retaining the good grain.—*Boston*

192. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. (v. 8)

A man was standing in a telephone booth trying to carry on a conversation with a man in a distant part of the city, but he could not make out the message. He kept saying: "I can't hear. I can't hear." By and by the man on the other end of the line said sharply: "If you'll shut the door you can hear."

His door was not shut, and he heard the street and store noises more distinctly than the other man's voice. Some folk have their hearing badly confused because their doors have not been closed tightly. Man's voice and God's voice have become mixed in their ears. They cannot distinguish between them. The trouble is partly with the door. If you'll shut that door you can hear.—*Gordon*

193. The seed is the word of God. (v. 11)

In the city of Washington there is a unique and remarkable copy of the Constitution of the United States. If one examines it closely, it appears simply a chaos of irregular lines and peculiar lettering. But when the visitor steps back and views it in proper perspective, he is suddenly surprised to see the face of George Washington looking out upon him. The lines are so spaced and the letters are so shaded as to make a good likeness of the Father of our country. And just as Washington's face shines through all our early history, as crystallized and reflected in the Constiution, so does the glorious face of Christ look out upon us from the pages of our Bible.—*Straton*

194. The garden, not the laboratory

The chemist takes the seed into the laboratory; he analyzes it and gives you the details of its composition; but he fails to find life. The gardener may know nothing of its chemical composition, but he plants and cultivates it, and lo, it grows and bears fruit. There is a mystery of power in the Word, which the critic cannot discover, but which every true child of God realizes as the fruits of the gospel abound in the world, the Church and his individual life.

Quinquagesima Sunday

Luke 18: 31-43

195. Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. (v. 31)

A lieutenant in the army during a charge saw his sergeant hit by a bullet, fall into a shell hole. The young lieutenant ran to the spot to see what he could do for the other man and when he had almost reached him was shot and killed. The sergeant, however, recovered. He was a man much addicted to drink. The parents of the brave lieutenant wanted to see the young man for whose sake their son had met death. They invited him to their home and he went when on furlough, but came in a drunken state. The mother received him and showed him every courtesy, but when the sergeant left she broke down and wept bitterly, saying: "Oh, that my son should have to die for such a man."

196. All things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. (v. 31)

These words remind one of that delightful story of Ulysses in Homer's "Odyssey." Ulysses, you remember, after many years' absence at war, returns home. So changed is he that his household failed to recognize him. He must prove his identity. He does so by taking from the wall his great bow, "the bow which none save the arm of Ulysses could bend," and while they look on he bends it with perfect ease, declaring, "Now you know that it is indeed Ulysses," and it was he. So Christ fulfilled prophecies which proved His identity.

197. Behold, we go up to Jerusalem. (v. 31)

Pizarro, the Peruvian explorer, once faced his soldiers on a day when their enterprise had run into perilous hazard. With his sword's point he drew a line on the sand from east to west and, turning to the south, he said to his followers, "Friends and comrades! on that side are toil, hunger, nakedness, the drenching storm, desertion, and death; on this side, ease and pleasure. There lies Peru with its riches, here, Panama and its poverty. Choose, each man, what best becomes a brave Castilian. For my part I go to the south." That sounds extraordinarily like the appeal of Jesus.

198. Bartimeus. (v. 35)

Everything was against Bartimeus, environment, affliction, unsympathetic men; but Christ is on his side, and the blind beggar is crowned victor. What is your handicap? Have you said in despair: "There is no hope for me; my case is beyond remedy; I must go limping all my days." And why do you say that? Is it not because you have failed to read God's good news from eternity? All a soul has to do to be saved is to realize its lostness, and then, like Bartimeus, ask for Christ's help. Did he not halt that pilgrim host for this blind man? And he would halt plumed regiments on high, if necessary, to hear your cry. When German diggers recently found a new poem of Sappho in the dust heaps of Oxyrhynchus, an English poetry lover confessed that he was made to leap out of bed for joy. Think of it, a lyric of Sappho raised from the dust! The marvel is that the Lesbian's buried words did not take root and blossom into singing flowers. Now Paul says: "We are God's poems." Just as Sappho's golden fragments are an expression of her mind, so are we expressions of God's mind. But we are down in the dust, buried in the Oxyrhynchus of flesh, entombed by sinful habits. Alas! we are poems that have lost their rhythm; we do not go singingly. Who can give us back our song? Who can lift us out of the dust heaps and restore us to our place in the poetry of the universe? Ah, there is but One, no other, now and forevermore, who can accomplish this task. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

199. The heavenly Ephphatha. (v. 35)

A little boy was born blind. At last an operation was performed; the light was let in slowly; when one day his mother led him out of doors, and uncovered his eyes, and for the first time he saw the sky and the earth. "Oh, mother!" he cried, "why didn't you tell me it was so beautiful?" She burst into tears and said, "I tried to tell you, dear, but you could not understand me." So it is when we try to tell what is in the Bible. Unless the spiritual sight is opened we cannot understand. In the light of this fact, how blessed, how to be desired, is the work of the Holy Spirit. Ask and receive.

200. The blind sister. (v. 35)

An affecting scene occurred in the streets of Baltimore. Two little sisters were looking through a large store window at the toys within, and trying to describe what they saw to a little blind sister who was with them. They were exhausting their

feeble powers of description to bring home to the mind of their blind companion what they saw, although she listened greedily. But, after all, they failed to present anything more than an imperfect representation. The gentleman who saw the circumstance said that it was extremely touching, that they tried hard to describe the collection in the store, but they could not do it. That is just like our trying to tell you of Christ.

201. Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. (v. 37)

'Tis an ancient fable that tells of a youth who very much wanted to see the prince as he passed by on his way to be crowned king in the royal city. He lived a great distance from the principal highway along which the prince and his company would pass, but he felt that his cup of happiness would be complete if only he could see the prince. His father and mother tried to dissuade him, but he seemed so determined that finally they gave their consent to his going. Rough and stony was the road that led to the highway, but at last, after much effort, he reached it, tired and worn. He was so exhausted with his long and tiresome journey, however, that while waiting he fell into a deep sleep. There didn't happen to be anyone kind enough to awaken him when the prince and the royal attendants came along, and so the splendid procession of the prince and his gaudily arrayed courtiers passed by, unseen by the anxious youth. After it was all over he suddenly awoke, and so keen was his disappointment that he spent all the rest of his days in bitter regret. "O, that I could only have seen him!" was his cry by day and his wail by night. But he had passed, never again to return. And until the day of his death this bitter lament might have been heard by the passerby in the little village to which he returned.

So methinks Jesus of Nazareth, the Prince of Peace, is passing by on His royal march to be crowned "King of kings and Lord of lords." He is coming your way. He is coming my way. He is already moving along the ages with majestic splendor. A mighty company of apostles, prophets, martyrs, and saints are attending him. Are you and I going to fall asleep while this pageant of all time is passing before our eyes, and then spend the years of eternity in the bitter lament: "O, that I might have seen Him"? I trust not. Awake! Awake, then! 'ere it be forever too late.—*B. F. D.*

202. The passing Christ recognized. (v. 37)

As people do not recognize that Christ passeth near to them when they are in health, even so they do not see as they ought

His hand in their sickness. An invalid lamented to a lady who came to see her, that she had abused her health before it was taken from her. The friend replied, "I hope that now you will take care not to abuse your sickness." Assuredly we abuse our sickness when we do not see the hand of God in it, and do not allow Jesus of Nazareth, who passeth by our bed, to bring us nearer to Himself.—*E. J. Hardy*

203. Sight restored. (v. 42)

An operation was performed on the eyes of a boy who was born blind. The doctor had cut away the obstruction from his eyes, and the bandages placed there were one by one removed, until after a little they had all been taken off. When he opened his eyes in silent wonder as in a new world, he saw his mother, and yet he did not know that it was she. Then he heard her familiar voice asking him, "My son, can you see me?" He sprang into her arms exclaiming, "Oh, mother! is this heaven?"

Yes, heaven is vision. It is having the obstruction and the bandages removed. It is looking into the faces of our loved ones. It is seeing our Saviour face to face. It is to awake and be satisfied.—*D. B. Knox*

The First Sunday in Lent

Matthew 4: 1-11

204. Forty days. (v. 2)

For forty days this fast of the Lord endured. But where fore for exactly this number, for forty, and neither more nor less? On a close examination we note it to be everywhere the number or signature of penalty, of affliction, of the confession or the punishment of sin. Thus it is the signature of the punishment of sin in the forty days and forty nights during which God announces that He will cause the waters by the deluge to prevail (Gen. 7: 4, 12); in the forty years of the Israelites' wanderings in the desert (Num. 14: 33); in the forty stripes with which the offender should be beaten (Deut. 25: 3); in the desolation of Egypt which should endure forty years (Ezek. 29: 11). So also is it the signature of the confession of sin. Moses intercedes forty days for his people; the Ninevites proclaim a fast of forty days; Ezekiel must bear for forty days the transgression of Juda. And in agreement with all this, resting on the forty days' fast of her Lord, is the Quadragesimal Lent fast of the Church; and so, too, not less the selection of this Scripture of the Temptation to supply the Gospel for the first Sunday in that season, as being the Scripture which duly laid to heart, will more than any other help us rightly to observe that time.—*Archbishop Trench*

205. Appetite. (v. 3)

The anaconda is captured by throwing to it a live dog. When it has bolted the dog it goes to sleep, and then is easily bagged. How many a man is led captive through his appetite.

206. It is written. (v. 4)

"It is written" should be in the heart and on the lips of every Christian. "It is written" should decide every controversy, settle every doubt, and overcome every difficulty.

207. Man shall not live by bread alone. (v. 4)

Our soul cannot live without food any more than our body can. Have you seen on the rocks by the sea shore little marine creatures living when the tide was out? You can find them, not in the briny pools left by the tide, but on the dry and naked rock, in the withering air, or in the burning, broiling sun. They

lived because, when twice each day the foaming tide came in, and covered the rocky shelves they clung to, they opened and shut their shelly mouths to drink water enough to last them when the tide was out, and till the next tide came in. Even so, twice a day at least, should we replenish our thirsty souls and fill our emptiness from the ocean of grace and mercy that flows, free and full in Christ to the least of saints and chief of sinners.

208. Temptation and holiness. (v. 6)

He forced him not; he touched him not; only said, "Cast thyself down": that we may know, whosoever obeyeth the devil, casteth himself down; for the devil may suggest; compel he cannot.—*"Anglican and American Pulpit Library"*

209. It is written. (vs. 4-6)

We read that Oliver Cromwell had in his army one regiment, a fine, strong regiment, called "The Ironsides." They were very religious men. It was the custom for every soldier to carry his Bible to battle with him. They used to carry their Bibles under their cloaks; and more than once in battle, a soldier would have been shot through the heart but for his Bible. The bullet went through his Bible or it would have gone through his heart. The Bible saved the heart.

210. All these things will I give thee. (v. 9)

Ever since that bait was offered to the Redeemer and rejected, the tempter has been constantly setting the perilous alternative before the souls of men. The glittering bait is specially dangled before the greatest and noblest souls, and these prove their greatness and nobility by exchanging it for a cross. Both John Knox and Richard Baxter were offered by carnal state powers a bishopric in the Erastian church. How unspeakably poorer would have been the religious history of both Scotland and England had these men found their popular success in ecclesiastical preferment! Today Spinoza is honored for declining the fortune that was offered to him, and it is refreshing to read how Diderot instantly said "No" to the bribe of a hundred thousand francs a year from Catherine the Great to become a member of her court. It is the glory of the memory of Faraday that he declared, "He could not afford to be rich." Cobden stood for the poor, and therefore he stood out against Palmerston's offer of a baronetcy and a seat in his cabinet. Gold weighed heavy then, as now, but it did not outweigh the souls of these heroes.

211. Temptation must be nipped in the bud. (v. 10)

There is an ancient legend that describes how a small insect came each day and fed from the bowl of milk which was a child's meal. The insect was allowed to continue unmolested. At last it grew to be a monster which slew the boy. If temptation is to be overcome, it must be nipped in the bud. Allow it to become thoroughly rooted and grounded in the life and it becomes wellnigh invincible and irresistible. Let no one deem himself secure. Constant watchfulness is our only hope. For even in the cleanest garden will start the most noxious weeds.

212. Putting him to flight. (v. 10)

Luther says, "Once upon a time the devil said to me, 'Martin Luther, you are a great sinner and you will be damned!' 'Stop, stop!' said I, 'one thing at a time; I am a great sinner, it is true, though you have no right to tell me of it. I confess it. What next?' 'Therefore you will be damned!' 'That is not good reasoning. It is true that I am a great sinner, but it is written, 'Jesus Christ came to save sinners,' therefore, I shall be saved. Now go your way!' So I cut the devil off with his own sword, and he went away mourning because he could not cast me down by calling me a sinner."

213. Get thee hence, Satan. (v. 10)

Alexander, the Great, came to visit Diogenes, the philosopher, who dwelt in a tub. When Alexander came to him and stood at the entrance to the little hovel and asked in a patronizing way: "Diogenes, is there anything which Alexander, the king, can do for you?" the old philosopher replied: "Yes, there is one thing you can do for me; stand out of my sunlight." The only conversation that you and I need to have with the devil is to order him out of our sunlight. Some of you ought to do that. He stands between you and the Light of the world, between you and the Sun of Righteousness. Order him out of the way.

214. Temptation resisted. (v. 10)

As the Sandwich Islander believes that the strength and valor of the enemy he kills passes into himself, so we gain the strength of the temptation we resist.

215. Our struggle

Every one of us finds within himself a higher and a lower nature struggling for the mastery. Every soul has both a Dr.

Jekyll and a Mr. Hyde. Watkinson has imagined a biologist grafting in its pupa state a part of a butterfly on to a part of a spider. These grow to maturity and we have combined a passion for the sunshine and a love of darkness, a longing for roses and a thirst for blood. This is a picture of the struggle that is going on in every human heart between what the man is and what he ought to be.

216. The devil industrious. (vs. 1-11)

I remember my mother telling a story when I was young, it is one of the earliest stories I remember hearing and one of the best. It was about a very charitable woman who would never allow anyone to be criticized in her presence. Whenever a person criticized another in her presence she defended the one criticized. The children decided they would test her. They began to criticize the devil to see if she would take his part. They had not gone far when she stopped them and said: "Well, children, if we were all as industrious as the devil is we would accomplish a great deal more than we do."—*W. J. Bryan*

217. Temptation conducive to beauty

The pebble cannot be polished without friction, nor can the graces of the Christian be fully developed without trials.

218. Temptation conducive to strength

No man was ever worth much who did not pass through some severe ordeals. A mushroom or a cucumber may be raised in the hothouse; not so the oak. When you want that to grow you plant it on the mountain slope, where it strikes its roots deeper into the soil, and becomes more compact in its fibre, because of the resistance it offers to the passing storm. The human frame, if it is to acquire strength, must not be wrapped for years in swaddling clothes, but trained to run in the race and wrestle in the strife. The good soldier is not made in times of peace.

219. Temptation. (Matt. 4: 1-11)

Satan will seldom come to a Christian with a gross temptation; a green log and a candle may be safely left together; but bring a few shavings, then some small sticks, and then larger, and you may soon bring the green log to ashes.—*"Anglican and American Pulpit Library"*

The Second Sunday in Lent

Matthew 15: 21-28

220. Spread of truth to foreign lands. (v. 21)

Captain Cook found in the South Seas some uninhabited islands, waving with the fruits and flowers peculiar to Europe. No human hand had planted the seeds in that soil. How, then, were they there? A boy in one of our valleys is amusing himself with seeds. A few of them fall from his hand into the tiny stream at his cottage door: they are carried down to the river, which floats them out to sea. They are drifted about for thousands of miles, and at last cast upon the shore of a South Sea island. A bird picks them up, and flies to its nest; but, scared by a hawk, lets them drop. They are covered with the leaves of the forest till spring calls them forth. By and by the wind shakes out the ripe seed, and carries it abroad. Again it falls into the kindly bosom of the earth, and again spring draws it forth. Thus, we may suppose, the deserted island is soon clothed with an European harvest. And thus the seed of God's Word is often scattered, we cannot tell how.—*J. Wells*

221. A mother's love. (v. 22)

There is a legend which tells that an angel was sent one day to bring back the most beautiful thing on earth. He saw a bed of full blown roses, and he gathered an armful and started to return to his home above. As he soared into the air he saw a baby's smile, and admired its beauty so much that he returned to take it. By the baby's side he discovered a mother's love, and with all three in his arms he rose to heaven. Just outside the gate he paused for a moment, and lo! the roses had withered, the baby's smile had vanished, but strong as ever the mother's love remained; and he cast the others aside and took this and laid it at the Master's feet as the most lovely and lasting thing on earth.

222. Love of a mother. (v. 22)

Princess Alice was one of the most brilliant characters that England has ever known. Her little son was dangerously ill of diphtheria and the mother had been cautioned not to inhale the poisonous breath. Standing by his bed, she laid her hand gently upon his fevered brow. The child opened his eyes, looked steadily at his mother, reached his little arms out plead-

ingly toward her and whispered: "Mamma, kiss me!" A mother's overwhelming love then asserted itself, and, disregarding the warnings of the physicians, she stooped and pressed her lips passionately to the child's. The result was the death of the lovely Princess Alice. How such an exhibition of a mother's love thrills the human heart.

But I can tell you of a more thrilling story than this. The old, old story, the sweetest ever told by angels or by mortal lips. It is the story of the Son of God who stooped from heaven to earth to imprint a kiss of love, of compassion and forgiveness upon poor sinful and suffering humanity.

223. The love of a pastor

Dr. Ross, a Baptist clergyman, told the compiler of these illustrations that during the influenza epidemic a young girl, who was dying, asked him to kiss her, thinking that he was her father. Dr. Ross complied with her wish since he did not wish her to die in the belief that her father would not kiss her. When he later told the physician of the incident, the latter said: "I would not have done that for ten thousand dollars."

224. Persistence. (v. 23)

In a gun factory a great bar of steel, weighing 500 pounds and eight feet in length, was suspended vertically by a very slender chain. Nearby a common bottle cork was suspended by a silk thread. The purpose was to show that the cork could set the steel bar in motion. It seemed impossible. The cork was swung gently against the steel bar, and the steel bar remained motionless. But it was done again and again for ten minutes, and lo! at the end of that time the bar gave evidence of feeling uncomfortable; a sort of nervous chill ran over it. Ten minutes later and the chill was followed by a vibration. At the end of half an hour the bar was swinging like the pendulum of a clock.

So we can succeed by keeping at it. It is by ceasing that we lose. Nothing is accomplished by spasmodic effort. Like the tiny cork, we must keep pounding away. It is the constant flow of electricity that does the work. To break the connection we stop the flow and the whole work we are doing is stopped. We once read of the discomfiture of Paris under one day's loss of electricity. Keep in touch with the power house. But to do so we must lay hold upon the ground current as well. For it is only when heaven and earth are thus united that the flow is made possible and the effects sought for are realized. To lay hold upon God and appropriate what we can from Him

we must lay hold upon humanity and act as a medium between God and man or the supply from above will be cut off or neutralized, as no longer serving the purpose for which it was furnished.

225. Hold fast. (v. 25)

Hold fast in childlike faith and trust as did this woman of Canaan. Let us not be carried away by strange doctrine, but let our hearts be established in faith, that no one may take our crown. A Roman priest once said to a Lutheran peasant: "With your church it will soon be *Matthaer am letzten*," *i.e.*, Matthew the last chapter. This was a German slang expression, denoting: "Your church will soon be on its deathbed." But our wideawake peasant knew his Bible and had his answer ready. "Why, that's splendid," he exclaimed, "in Matthew the last chapter, the last verse, our Saviour says: 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.'"

226. Lord, help me. (v. 25)

There is a chain of but three links in this prayer of the poor woman of Canaan, but it reaches a long way. Some of the most beautiful prayers ever uttered are very short prayers. This is a very short prayer; any child can say it. There are three links in the chain, mark you. One link is on the throne of God; it is "Lord." The other link is down here; it is "me." And then there is a great link between that and this; it is "help." "Lord, help me." And the greater your need, the more that middle link in the chain will express. — *Marcus Rainsford*

227. It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to the dogs. (v. 26)

The Jews called the heathen "dogs," just as the Mohammedans of the East in our day call the Christians the same, meaning thereby that they despise them. But the expression as Jesus uses it here: To take the bread of the children and throw it to the dogs, was probably a proverb which Jesus uses. It would appear so from the diminutive form, "kunarion," a little dog that was allowed to be in the house with the family.

228. Truth, Lord: yet. . . . . (v. 27)

"Truth, Lord: yet!" is the sum and substance of faith. If we have learned to combine these words we have learned to believe. "Truth, Lord:" "sin has abounded unto death;" yet "hath Thy grace more abounded unto life." "Truth, Lord:"

"cursed is every one that abideth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them;" yet, "He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." "Truth, Lord," is the sea of our sin and guilt, and the righteous anger of God; "yet," is the rock of Christ's redemption and love. "Truth, Lord," is a view of self; "yet," is a view of Jesus.

229. Asking for crumbs. (v. 27)

Laurence Justinian, first Patriarch of Venice, resembled this woman in the prayer he offered when at the point of death. "I dare not ask for a seat among the happy spirits who behold the Holy Trinity. Nevertheless, Thy creature asks for some portion of the crumbs of Thy most holy table. It shall be more than enough for me, O, how much more than enough! If Thou wilt not refuse some little place to this Thy poor servant beneath the feet of the least of Thine elect."

230. An incident like this. (v. 27)

Dean Plumptre gives the following story from the Talmud. "There was a famine in the land, and stores of corn were placed under the care of Rabbi Jehudah, the Holy, to be distributed only to those who were skilled in the knowledge of the law. And, behold, a man came, Jonathan, the son of Amram, and clamorously asked for his portion. The Rabbi asked him whether he knew the condition, and had fulfilled it, and then the suppliant changed his tone and said, 'Nay, but feed me as a dog is fed, who eats of the crumbs of the feast,' and the Rabbi hearkened to his words, and gave him of the corn."

231. Faith. (v. 28)

Missionaries to heathen lands are often perplexed because the natives have no word for "faith" or "believe." They cannot make the people understand what faith means. One day when a missionary was busy translating the Bible a tired native came into his study, sat down on one chair and put his feet on another and said: "How good it is to lean my whole weight on the chairs!" The missionary jumped up and asked the man to repeat the words. He listened eagerly. He had gained at last the word for "believe" and he used it in his translation.

Listen to the beauty of the expression: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever leans his whole weight on Him shalt not perish, but have eternal life." "What must I do to be saved?" "Lean thy whole weight on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved."

The Third Sunday in Lent

Luke 11: 14-28

232. Possessed with devils. (v. 14)

Dostoevsky tells us that in his childhood he often happened to see "possessed" women in the villages and monasteries. "They used to be brought to mass; they would squeal and bark like a dog so that they were heard all over the church. But when the sacrament was carried in and they were led up to it, at once the "possession" ceased, and the sick women were always soothed for a time."

233. He casteth out devils. (v. 14)

An impressive picture of modern art is that which has for its scene the Evil One, the devil, sitting at a table playing a game of chess. Bending over the board, with the self-possession of a master, reclines the adversary of man. At the opposite side is a young man. There is a look of diabolical glee upon the dark brow of Satan, whilst the features of his playmate wear the signs of deepest agony; for, alas! that which the youth has staked upon the results of the game seems to be hopelessly lost—his immortal soul. Back of the young man, unseen by him, the artist has painted a calm, benignant figure. It is the Angel of the Covenant, whose heavenly skill at last checkmates the Destroyer.

234. He casteth out devils through Beelzebub. (v. 15)

Because you want the grace that others have,
You judge it straight a thing impossible
To compass wonders but by help of devils.—*Shakespeare*

235. A house divided against itself. (v. 17)

In 1858, in the city of Springfield, Illinois, a long, gaunt and comparatively unknown backwoodsman made an address that aroused a nation to its needs and put him, at once, into the forefront of the battle that was imminent. That man was Abraham Lincoln; that speech was the one that has since been known, and forever will be known as "A House Divided Against Itself."

236. A house divided against itself. (v. 17)

The story has been told of an engagement during the Franco-British War. Two English vessels in the Channel during the darkness of the night mistook one another for a French man-of-war and opened fire on one another. Many men were killed and others were seriously injured, both the vessels sustained serious damage from the firing. When the day broke great was their surprise to find the British flag flying from the masthead of both vessels. All through that long night they had been engaged in mortal combat; they had fought in ignorance of what the morrow would disclose. It was then of no avail, both were incapable of further action.

When the day breaks what shall we find? Warring and conflicting spirits within the same camp while the Captain of our salvation is one and the same Lord, Jesus Christ.

237. Satan vanquished by Christ. (v. 22)

In "Pilgrim's Progress" we read about a house in which there was a fire burning in the fireplace. That fire was called the Light of Truth. The devil was standing before the fire trying to put it out by pouring water on it. But the more water he poured the more the fire burned. The man who saw it couldn't understand it. At last he went around behind the fire and what do you suppose he found? Jesus was standing there with a can of oil in His hand, and whenever the devil threw some water on the fire, He would throw oil on it secretly, so that, the more the devil tried to put it out the higher and brighter it burned. It is always so. The more Satan hates us and tries to destroy us, the more Jesus loves and helps us.

238. Jesus is the Stronger One. (v. 22)

In the old evil days in France just before the Revolution in the last century, there were certain terrible dungeons called "oubliettes," or forgotten places. One day some person would disappear from his friends, and no one would ever know what had become of him. He had been taken to one of these secret and dark dungeons, forgetting perhaps his own name and family. When the Revolution came the doors of these secret prisons were thrown open and the unhappy prisoners were released, though blinded and broken by long confinement. Satan still has his "oubliettes" for those who refuse to renounce him, and seek Christ's help against him. They have forgotten God, forgotten their Saviour, forgotten their Christian name and calling. Who can open these prison doors? There is but one

answer. There is but one Deliverer. "The Lord looseth men out of prison." Jesus Christ is the "Stronger One" who alone can give "liberty to the captives."

239. On which side are you? (v. 23)

During the dark days of the Civil War a delegation came to President Lincoln and when the spokesman had presented the matter he concluded by saying: "We trust the Lord is on our side, Mr. Lincoln." The President replied: "I do not regard that as essential as something else." The visitors were very much surprised, until the President added: "I am most concerned to know that we are on the Lord's side."

Lincoln was right. The right side is not my side or yours. The Lord's side is the place to which every one of us should rally. Stand on the Lord's side even if you stand alone.

240. I was there. (v. 23)

Napoleon once struck a medal in memory of a great battle. On one side was the date and on the other the words: "I was there." There is a great battle now going on between the powers of Satan, and the power of God. Let all Christians, therefore, take their stand that they may be able to say: "I was there."

241. One of Satan's modern devices. (v. 26)

The devil one day met one of his local subordinates on the street of a certain city, and said to him, "Well, how are things getting along in this town?"

"For the first time since I have been stationed here," said the sub-devil, "they are looking pretty badly."

"Why, what's the matter?"

"See that fellow across the street?"

"Yes, what about him?"

"Well, in some way or other he has got hold of a grain of truth, the real thing. And that grain of truth is like a deadly bomb. If he ever uses it rightly, he will blast to pieces our whole business here."

The devil looked carefully at the man on the opposite sidewalk. Then he said: "I'll tell you how to get a grip on him. You tempt him to take that grain of truth and organize it. Get him to make it the basis of some kind of a program or a society or a club. Then, when he gets it working he will spend so much time running the club, that he won't have any time left to use the truth against us."

From the latest reports, I hear that the man yielded to the temptation and the devil's plan is working beautifully. That grain of truth which was the basis of the organization he founded lies in a glass case unused, hidden and masked beneath the ponderous program which is simply playing into the devil's hands.

242. A certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. (v. 27)

The Oriental attributes a man's good qualities in a large measure to prenatal influence and to the mother's milk. The latter, aside from its nutritive qualities is supposed to possess certain mystic influences which tend to fashion the possibilities of character. Among the blessings that the patriarch Jacob asked for Joseph are included the "blessings of the breasts, and of the womb."

In his book, "The Syrian Christ," Abraham Ribbany says: "The most solemn occasion on which I heard this expression used in my native land was that when the great Patriarch of Antioch visited our town in Mt. Lebanon. Upon his arrival at the priest's house, where he was entertained, the waiting multitude, including the governor of the district, stood with bowed heads to receive the prelate's benediction. I shall never forget that scene. Standing in the door, our revered and beloved patriarch seemed to us to be a visitor from the celestial sphere, full of truth and grace. As he lifted his right arm and imparted his blessing to the silent assemblage, a woman of our church, a mother, who was almost overcome with emotion, advanced toward the spiritual ruler, and with her face and open palms turned toward heaven, exclaimed, in the vernacular Arabic, "Blessed be the inwards that bore you, and the breasts you sucked!" Whereupon the distinguished visitor bestowed a special blessing upon the humble suppliant, to the great satisfaction of the profoundly affected multitude.

The Fourth Sunday in Lent

John 6: 1-15

(*See also the Seventh Sunday after Trinity*)

243. The resource of Christ

Pythias is famous for having, at his own expense, entertained Xerxes' whole army, consisting of ten hundred thousand men. But he grew so poor thereafter, that he wanted bread 'ere he died. Our Saviour fed five thousand, and His store was not a jot diminished.

244. Now there was much grass in the place. (v. 10)

It all depends upon the season in which one comes to the north-eastern shore of the lake of Gennesaret as to whether or not he will find much grass there. The note of time ("now the passover . . . . was at hand") shows that our Lord was there in the spring. At that season the grass in that region is plentiful and green; a few months later, and it is burned up by the heat, and the country presents a dreary aspect. It cannot be said of many places in the Orient that there is much grass there. In England, and in the well-watered regions of the United States, one of the chief charms of the landscape is the soft carpet of green which covers the soil. In a characteristic Oriental scene, this charm is lacking. The grass may straggle here and there, or at special seasons it may show an unwonted luxuriance in certain places; but the universal carpet of green is chiefly conspicuous by its absence.

245. A constant miracle. (v. 11)

An analogy, and so to speak, a help to the understanding of this miracle, has been found in that which year by year is accomplished in the field, where a single grain of corn multiplies itself and in the end unfolds in numerous ears. And with this analogy in view many beautiful remarks have been made; as this, that while God's everyday miracles had grown cheap in men's sight by continual repetition, He had therefore reserved something, not more wonderful, but less frequent, to arouse men's minds to a new admiration. Others have urged that here, as in the case of the water made wine, Christ did but

compress into a single moment all those processes which in ordinary circumstances the same Lord of nature causes more slowly to succeed one another.—*Archbishop Trench*

246. Gather up the fragments. (v. 12)

A literal illustration of our Lord's words may be found in the experience of Dr. Pusey. Canon Liddon tells us that when Pusey sat for the Oriel Fellowship examination in 1823 he had one of his bad headaches and broke down. "He tore up his essay, saying that there was no good in going on with it." The Rev. Henry Jenkyns, then Fellow of Oriel, and afterwards Canon of Durham, "picked up the bits, put them together, and showed the essay to the Fellows. It was a capital essay." Before the end of the week the young candidate's election was secure.—*"Life of Dr. Pusey," Vol. 1*

247. Cost reckoned. (v. 12)

When your child throws away a piece of bread, make him pick it up again and tell him the history of that piece of bread. Tell him what has been requisite that that bread might exist. Tell him of the toils of the plowman and of the sower, under the sky, inclement and changeful; the obscure bursting of the seed in the ground, the long sleep under the snow, the awakening in the spring, when the green life along the furrows makes its orisons to the sun, source of life. Describe the hope of the farmer when the corn puts forth its ears, and his anguish when the storm rises on the horizon. Do not forget the harvester who wields his scythe in the dog-day heat, and that poor prisoner of the cities, pledged to nocturnal toil in overheated cellars, the baker.—*Chas. Wagner*

248. Gathering up the fragments. (v. 12)

The United States Assay Office, in Wall Street, has an annual sweeping to gather up the fine dust of gold which would otherwise be lost. I suppose no housekeeper in the world subjects her house to quite so thorough a sweeping as this building receives. Chimneys, ceilings, walls and flues are scraped, floors are mopped, sometimes torn up, and roofs are swept. This is done to the end that much of the valuable metal that has sifted away in dust may be returned to swell the coffers of Uncle Sam. This reminds one of the command of Christ to His disciples, on the occasion when He fed several thousand people with a few loaves and fishes, and then required of His followers to gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost. Many people who have abundant health and strength are tempted to prodigal-

ity and wastefulness in time and opportunity. We need to gather up the fine gold of every day's privilege, in the way of Christian service. It is often these little nicks of time and the small opportunities of helpfulness that count for most.

249. Utilization of waste. (v. 12)

An apprentice made a gorgeous cathedral window from the fragments of glass his master threw away. When David Cox used to sketch many things on paper and then cast them aside as not being up to his ideal, they were cast into the wastepaper basket or scattered on the floor. His old housekeeper, however, from reverence to her master, collected these torn and crumpled pieces. When the gifted artist died, and his effects were sold, the old housekeeper had her relics framed and realized some thousands of pounds, on which she was able to pass the rest of her days in comfort. There was unexpected value in the fragments and scraps! Were we as careful to try and save time, or to seize opportunities of winning souls, what glory might not be brought to Christ!—*"Homiletic Magazine"*

The Fifth Sunday in Lent

John 8: 46-59

250. Which of you convinceth me of sin? (v. 46)

Christendom should not let die the memory of Father Damien, the Belgian priest, who went in 1873 to the Molokai Settlement for Lepers in the Hawaiian Islands. He spent his life for the victims of that dread scourge. After ten years he was able to begin his sermons, "We lepers"—the leprous insensibility of his skin had already smitten him. He died the lepers' martyr.

The difference between what Father Damien did and what Christ did is infinite. Damien took upon himself the leprosy and the leprosy vanquished him. Jesus took upon Himself our sin, but Jesus vanquished that sin. Christ remains untainted. *"In Him was no sin!"—S. Edward Young*

251. Human fallibility. (v. 46)

Alexander, the Great, had as his constant companion a philosopher whom he finally dismissed. When asked the reason for the dismissal the emperor replied: "Because you have so long a time been my companion but have discovered not a single fault in me."

252. All men fallible. (v. 46)

All men, even the highest and greatest on earth, must confess of themselves: "I am poor and sinful and mortal." When a man upon meeting the celebrated Tholuck expressed his joy at having had the opportunity to meet and converse with the great man the latter replied: "Oh, you have only seen another poor sinner."

Emperor Wilhelm I said to Sister Louise of Kaiserswerth, whose great desire was to get a near view of her emperor in the parade at Potsdam: "You see only a human being like others."

253. Which of you convinceth me of sin? (v. 46)

It has been said of Henry VIII that if all the tyrants of the world were dead, one could imagine them resurrected in this one man. I would like to say something entirely different about

our Lord Jesus Christ, namely, that if all truth and beauty and goodness, since the beginning of the world, could be gathered together, it would all be found in Christ.

254. Purity of Jesus. (v. 46)

His life resembled a polished mirror, which the foulest breath cannot stain nor dim beyond a passing moment.—*Dr. Guthrie*

255. I have not a devil. (v. 49)

"When the Jews accused our Saviour of having a devil," writes St. Francis de Sales, "He answered simply, 'I have not a devil.' If you are accused of any great or scandalous fault, of which you know that you are not guilty, answer simply and quietly to that effect."

256. I honour my Father. (v. 49)

Polish nobles in ancient times drew their swords when in the liturgy the words "Glory be to God in the highest" were read. Then they sheathed their swords.

257. Glory ascribed to God. (v. 49)

King Edward III was accounted to have done things more commendable than his victories; for, having vanquished the French king by force of battle, he put off from himself the whole glory, and gave it devoutly to God, causing to be sung, "Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, Lord, but unto Thy name be the glory given, etc." And thus must everyone do, be his achievements never so great.—*Spencer*

258. He shall never taste of death. (v. 51)

He that follows the light of life according to the words of Jesus does not see death even as he who walks toward the sun does not see his shadow.

259. If I honour myself, my honour is nothing. (v. 54)

Melanchthon was disputing with Eck. When he met with a difficulty he was wont to say: "Let us wait till tomorrow with that." "Philip," said his opponent, "that does you no honour." "I have no concern for my honour, but for the honour of my Lord," answered the Reformer and thus won victory over both himself and his enemy.

260. Our knowledge of God. (v. 55)

A young child, who has hitherto fancied that the rim of the sky rests on the earth a few miles away, and that the whole world lies within that circle, sails down the Forth there, and sees the river-banks gradually widening, and the river passing into a frith. When he comes back, he tells his young companions how large the ocean is. Poor boy! he has not seen the ocean,—only the widened river. Just so with all creature knowledge of God. Though all the archangels were to utter all they know, there would still remain an infinity untold.—*Culcross*

261. Jesus went through the midst of them. (v. 59)

On the evening of the battle of Leuthen Frederick II entered alone into the castle of Lissa, which at the time was occupied by Austrian officers. When they approached him he said fearlessly: "Good evening." They could only answer "Ah!" and were so taken aback that it did not even occur to them to take him captive, than which nothing would have been easier. That was the impression made by human greatness. What must the impression of Christ have been.

Palmarum, the Sixth Sunday in Lent

Matthew 21: 1-9

262. An Old Testament triumphal entry. (v. 1)

The entry of Jesus into Jerusalem had its prototype in the triumphal procession which David led when he brought the Ark from its obscurity in the house of Obed-edom to a place of honor in the new capital of the united nation (I Chron. 15: 25-28).

The analogy is a very natural and fitting one. After seven and one-half years of reign at Hebron, David captured Jerusalem from the Jebusites, and thither moved the visible symbol of the presence of Jehovah. Songs and rejoicing accompanied the event. It is thought by many that three of the psalms may relate to this event. Psalm 101 is regarded as a reflection of the king's consecration of himself and his official household, and Psalm 15 as a solemn answer to the question what kind of man he should be who is to live in the city where God makes His abode. But more clearly than these Psalm 24 appears to echo the joy of the procession itself, the challenge rung down from the walls of the Jebusite city, "Who is this King of Glory?" and the answering chorus from those in the procession, "Jehovah of hosts, he is the King of Glory." It is this spirit which makes the 24th Psalm so fitting for the opening of a Palm Sunday service.

263. Jerusalem. (v. 1)

Jerusalem, the chief city of Palestine, was once the capital of the ancient united kingdom of Israel and Judah. The earliest Biblical reference to that city is Gen. 14: 18. Excavations on the banks of the Nile have brought to light clay tablets, the inscriptions upon which show that as far back as the fifteenth century before Christ Jerusalem was a city of considerable importance. The place is there referred to as Uru-Salim ("The City of the God of Peace"), from which has come the name Jerusalem.

264. Triumphal progress of Christ (v. 8)

"While Christ alone can save the world, Christ cannot save the world alone." He needs followers and helpers, and not merely such as bestrewed His pathway and saluted Him with

hosannas when He rode into Jerusalem, but such as believe in Him sufficiently to obey Him in everything and, if need be, to die for Him.

There is somewhere a picture of a roadway in India, across which there are lying, side by side, and close together, a large number of people, while a man who is on horseback rides deliberately over them, his horse necessarily stepping on some of them. They represent a religious sect among the people of India and the whole picture represents a religious ceremony in which the people of that sect participate, supposing that by thus making a living roadway for the progress of their great high priest they are performing a highly meritorious action, and that if any of them is seriously injured by it he will be rewarded by everlasting blessedness. We call that ceremony a superstition, and are justified in doing so; but, nevertheless, it suggests a great truth, that the best roadway for the progress of any spiritual ruler, as he goes forth on a mission of truth and salvation, is constituted of human beings who are devoted both to him and to the cause which he serves.

Is not that the only kind of a roadway by which Jesus can advance to His prophesied victory? How can He obtain world-wide dominion;—how can He make an end of sin and bring in universal righteousness;—unless we thus become, as it were, His stepping stones?

265. A triumphal entry. (vs. 8, 9)

When (at the close of the Franco-Prussian war) the German army entered Paris, they had a regular triumphal procession, and the world admired the splendor of their achievements. The papers were full of pictures of that event, and German artists have represented it again and again on canvas. But there were many things about that triumphal entry that were not dwelt upon by writers and painters. Behind that army what a sea of woe surged! How many dead strewed the way, and how many burned villages and towns marked their progress. How many widows and orphans were the consequence of that march, and, to this day, how much of poverty and distress bears witness to the dreadful progress of the German armies. Yes, the grandeur of the scene, as the German emperor marched past the triumphal arch on Champs Elysees, was more than counterbalanced by the bloodshed and havoc that lay behind him. This was a triumphal entry of an earthly monarch, and it is the kind of march to which the world has been accustomed ever since the days of the Roman emperors. What a different kind of a triumphal entry is that of which we read today.

266. Garments in the way. (v. 8)

At that time (1834), when some of the inhabitants of Bethlehem, who had participated in a rebellion (against the Turkish government) were already imprisoned, and all were in deep distress, Mr. Farrar, then English consul at Damascus, was on a visit to Jerusalem, and rode out with Mr. Nicolayson to Solomon's Pools. On their return, as they made the ascent to enter Bethlehem, hundreds of people, male and female, met them, imploring the consul to interfere in their behalf, and afford them his protection, and all at once, by a sort of simultaneous movement, they spread their garments in the way before the horses.—*Dr. Edward Robinson*

267. An unusual triumph

How different was the Palm Sunday processional from the return in victory of the Roman generals! The Palm Sunday triumph was a conquest of human hearts by acts of service, tenderness and care. Here was a Prince of Peace riding in the midst of His friends. Under the spell of that matchless personality rich Simon the Pharisee, despised Zacchæus, the publican, and the poorest Samaritan peasant could walk side by side. What a tribute to the character of Jesus that they could see, even for a day, the Anointed of God in the Village Carpenter of Nazareth, the wandering Preacher of Galilee, the Man who had not where to lay His head! Jesus accepted the tribute. It is our privilege today to join in the repetition of the Triumph. Let us shout Hosanna! Let us pray and bestow a blessing on the Lord's Christ by the giving of our children, our worship and our gifts! The annual celebration is a striking addition to the unusual character of the Triumphal entry of Jesus of Nazareth, our King and our God!

268. Welcoming monarch's approach. (v. 8)

Going out to meet an approaching guest, and escorting him to one's house with a show of honor, is a common custom throughout the East. A ruler of any sort, or a conquering hero is welcomed in that way as a matter of course. Thus it is that Abraham was welcomed by the kings of Canaan when he returned from his pursuit of Chedorlaomer; that Jephtha was welcomed by his daughter and her companions; that David was welcomed by singing and dancing women, out of all the cities of Israel, as he came back after the slaughter of the Philistines.

269. Casting our garments. (v. 8)

As those people cast their garments before Jesus as He rode in triumph, so we should cast our talents, our money, our time, our deeds of love, all that we have and are, before him, and do all that we can to aid His cause, and hasten His success. He is riding in triumph through the ages, and through all lands.

"Ride on triumphantly; behold we lay
Our lusts and proud wills in Thy way."

270. Spread their garments upon the way. (v. 8)

To spread one's outer garment as a carpet in the path of an approaching conqueror or distinguished personage has ever been considered a superlative act of homage.

Jehu, when the officers of the army of Israel chose him as their ruler, walked on the garments which they spread beneath his feet (II Kings 9:13). Agamemnon, tempted to an act of barbaric pomp, after the manner of eastern kings, entered his palace at Mycenae walking upon costly carpets (Aeschylus, Agam. 891). So in later history the young Sir Walter Raleigh, when Queen Elizabeth came to a miry part in the road, took off his new and costly plush mantle and spread it on the ground for the queen to walk over.

A similar custom, carried to a questionable extreme, is performed annually between Beirut and Damascus, when the chief sheik returns from the Mecca pilgrimage. Several hundred men lie down close together in the road, with faces to the ground, while the rider on his Arabian mare, paces slowly and carefully over their bodies. Fortunately, injuries seldom result, as each man bears but for a moment the pressure of one hoof.

271. Hosanna to the Son of David. (v. 9)

"Hosanna" is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew words, "Save, we pray!" in the sense that loyal subjects nowadays say, "God save the king!" A royal salutation was due Jesus as the natural inheritor of the promises made to David (II Sam. 7:12-16; I Chron. 17:10-14). The multitudes were quoting the Messianic sentiment expressed in Ps. 118:25, 26.

272. Blessed is the King that cometh. (v. 9)

Among the Arabs, even to the present day, this phrase is preserved in its Syriac form, *Mar-ha-ba* (Blessed is the coming one!) This salutation is used when travelers meet and pass in peace upon the highway. The conventional response is, *Mar-habtein* (May you be doubly blessed!)

273. They that went before and they that followed. (v. 9)

But now the people in the Valley of Kidron, and about the walls of Jerusalem, and the pilgrims whose booths and tents stood so thickly on the green slopes below, had caught sight of the approaching company, and heard the echo of the glad shouts, and knew what the commotion meant. At that time the palms were numerous in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, though now but a few remain; and tearing down their green and graceful branches, the people streamed up the road to meet the approaching Prophet. And when the two streams of people met, those who had accompanied Him from Bethany, and those who had come to meet Him from Jerusalem, they left Him riding in the midst, and some preceding, some following Him, advanced, shouting "Hosannas" and waving branches, to the gate of Jerusalem.—*Farrar, "Life of Christ"*

Easter Day. The Resurrection of Our Lord

Mark 16: 1-8

274. The Resurrection

A curious superstition leads the custodians of one of the temples in Japan to renew the whole of the structure every ten years. The work of renewal is always going on, a little at a time. Every new part is an exact fac-simile of the part it is made to replace; and in this way the identity of the first structure is maintained. And this has never ceased for a thousand years. The temple of the body is always being renewed after the same fashion. In the resurrection it will be renewed at once rather than part by part.—*Selby*

275. And very early on the first day of the week, they come to the tomb. (v. 2)

Chateaubriand gives a fanciful but an agreeable reason why Jewish women are so much handsomer than men of their nation. He says Jewesses have escaped the curse which alighted upon their fathers, husbands and sons. Not a Jewess was to be found among the crowd of priests and rabble who insulted the Son of God, scourged Him, crowned Him with thorns, and subjected Him to the infamy and agony of the cross. The women of Judea believed in the Saviour and assisted and soothed Him under affliction. Christ on His part extended mercy to the Jewesses. Recall, for instance, the widow of Nain, the sisters in Bethany, Simon's mother-in-law, and the woman who touched the hem of His garment. To the Samaritan woman He was a spring of living water. The daughters of Jerusalem wept over Him; the women accompanied Him to Calvary, brought Him balm and spices, and weeping, sought Him in the sepulchre. His first appearance after the resurrection was to Mary Magdalene.

The reflection of some beautiful ray must have rested on the brow of the Jewesses.

276. Resurrection. (v. 6)

The Jews have a custom whenever they enter a cemetery to bury one of their dead, to bend themselves three times to the earth; then taking the grass of the grave, which has been newly dug, and casting it behind them, they chant the words of the prophet, "Thy bones shall spring up again like the grass, O my brother."

277. Jesus' epitaph (v. 6)

When we wander through a graveyard and look at the tombstones, or go into a church and examine the old monuments, we see one heading to them all, "Here lies." Then follows the name with the date of death, and perhaps some praise of the good qualities of the deceased. But how different is the epitaph on the tomb of Jesus! It is not written in gold nor cut in stone, it is spoken by the mouth of an angel; and it is the exact reverse of what is put on all other tombs: "He is not here."—*S. Baring-Gould*

278. Resurrection. (v. 6)

Some years ago a vase closely sealed, was found in a mummy pit in Egypt, by the English traveler, Wilkinson, who sent it to the British Museum. The librarian having unfortunately broken it, found in it a few peas, old, wrinkled and as hard as a stone. The peas were planted carefully under a glass, on the fourth of June, 1844, and at the end of thirty days these seeds were seen to spring up into new life. They had been buried probably about three thousand years ago, perhaps in the time of Moses, and had slept all that time apparently dead, yet still living in the dust of the tomb.—*Gaussen.*

What this writer has told us about peas should remind us that God is just as able to raise our dead bodies from the grave and give them new life. For why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?

279. The Russian Easter. (v. 6)

On the night preceding Easter day, the Russian churches are densely thronged with the people, standing in darkness, holding unlighted candles, silent, expectant. When the midnight hour has struck, then from far away outside the church a plaintive strain of music is heard, a thrill goes through the assembly; the music approaches, waxes louder, sounding more joyous. The great western doors roll back, and light appears flowing into the church, attended by jubilant song. The procession of choir and clergy are entering with light and incense, in gorgeous robes, a train of light and color, of music and fragrance. Instantly the light is caught from the entering tapers, and runs in sparks through the church, flying from candle to candle, and every worshiper stands with his candle burning, so that the vast gloomy interior is suddenly a palace of glory. But this is not all. At the same moment each turns to his neighbor exclaiming: "Christ is risen!" and kisses him. Christ is risen, love is shed abroad, all men are brothers.

280. The vanquisher of death. (v. 6)

One of the most beautiful of the Greek plays the "Alcestis" of Euripides, tells how Herakles, the Samson of Greek story, on one of his journeys called at the palace of his friend, King Admetus, who had once done him a great service. He found the king and everybody in the palace wild with grief because the young and lovely Queen Alcestis had been taken away by Death, who was regarded as a mighty master, so strong and fierce that no man had ever been able to overcome him. Herakles, however, who had fought and slain many monsters, said he was not afraid of Death, and he would rescue the Queen from his clutches. He goes to the tomb and grapples successfully with the monster, whom he compels to give up his prey. The most beautiful scene in the play is where Herakles stands with the silent woman completely covered by a white veil in the presence of the heartbroken king. He lifts the veil and there stands Alcestis smiling with the bloom of health upon her cheeks.

That is a fable; but it is no fable that one stronger than Herakles has grappled with and overthrown Death. "I am the Resurrection and the Life," said Jesus. "He that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." "O, death, where is thy sting? O, grave, where is thy victory?" cried Paul.

281. Christ is risen. (v. 6)

A few years ago a book with the title, "Night," was published in England. It disclosed a conspiracy against Christianity that was formed by certain men who were bitter opponents of the Christian church. These men reported that they had made a discovery which would prove to the world that the resurrection of Christ was merely a fraud. In secret they had placed in an old grave a tablet on which Joseph of Arimathea related that he had removed the body of Jesus at night. The book went on to describe the results of this discovery for the whole world how the light of the Sun of Life was extinguished for mankind, until the deception was disclosed and exposed.

In his wonderful resurrection chapter, I Cor. 15, the apostle Paul tells us, better than anyone else can put it, what the results would have been, had Christ not risen from the dead. He says: "And if Christ had not been raised your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also that have fallen asleep in Christ have perished," and "then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain." But the best part of the New Testament story remains: CHRIST IS RISEN.

282. Resurrection. (v. 6)

Once, when accumulating troubles were disturbing Martin Luther, his friends saw him writing with his fingers on the dust of a table top, "Vivit, Vivit" (He lives, He lives). Let us say it to ourselves this morning with high joy, "Christ is risen," and in the quiet of this house let us hear the echo coming back from thousands and thousands of chapels and cathedrals over all the earth, "He is risen indeed."—*Fosdick*

283. The King lives. (v. 6)

Eight hundred years after Edward I was buried, they brought up his body, and they found that he still lay with a crown on his head. More than eighteen hundred years have passed, and I look into the grave of my dead King, and I see not only a crown, but "on His head are many crowns." And, what is more, He is rising. Yea, He has risen! Ye, who came to the grave weeping, go away rejoicing. Let your dirges now change to anthems. He lives! Take off the blackness from the gates of the morning. He lives! *I know that my Redeemer lives.* For whom that battle and that victory? For whom? For you. —*Dr. Talmage*

284. Even as He said. (v. 7)

During the recent war, after a German attack, an American boy who came back to our lines discovered that his pal, with whom he had fought side by side, was missing. Immediately he asked permission to go back over the field and get him. His officer advised him not to go and said: "If you do, it will not be worth while. Go at your own risk, but it will cost you your life." The boy went out, found his friend badly hurt, and brought him back near our line, but at that point the wounded soldier died. The rescuer himself was then shot. The officer leaning over him just before he died, said, "I told you you would lose your life. Was it worth while?" "Yes, sir," replied the dying soldier. "HE SAID HE KNEW I WOULD COME."

The First Sunday after Easter

John 20: 19-31

285. Thomas, who is called Didymus. (v. 24)

The name Didymus signifies "the twin," and there is a widespread, but unsupported, tradition that he was the twin brother of Jesus. An apocryphal book of the second century makes him the first missionary to India, whither he went after selling himself as a slave to an Indian merchant. Earlier traditions, however, make Persia his field. Secular historians state that he met martyrdom by means of a lance. Thorwaldsen's famous statue of St. Thomas, in a Copenhagen Church, represents him as "the thoughtful, meditative skeptic, with the rule in his hand for the due measuring of evidence and argument.

286. Thomas was not with them. (v. 24)

The biographer of "Father Morris," an American preacher of some local celebrity, tells of him this incident: "He had noticed a falling off in his little village meeting for prayer. The first time he collected a tolerable audience, he took occasion to tell them something concerning the conference meeting of the disciples, after the resurrection. "But Thomas was not with them! Thomas not with them!" said the old man in a sorrowful voice. "Why what could keep Thomas away? Perhaps," said he, glancing at some of his auditors, "Thomas had got cold-hearted, and was afraid they would ask him to make the first prayer. Perhaps," he continued, looking at some of the farmers, "he was afraid the roads were bad; or perhaps," he added after a pause, "he thought a shower was coming on." He went on, significantly summing up common excuses, and then with great simplicity and emotion he added: "But only think what Thomas lost, for in the middle of the meeting the Lord Jesus came and stood among them! Thomas was not with them when Jesus came."

287. Except I shall see, I will not believe. (v. 25)

See how foolish this is in worldly matters. An English traveler was once talking to the Emperor of Burmah (which is a very hot country) and telling him of different things in England. He spoke about the railroads, and the newspapers, and the shops, and the manufactories; and the Emperor, though

he was very much surprised, believed everything. At last the traveler happened to say something about skating, and the Emperor would listen no longer. He said: "You have told me many wonderful things, but I was willing to believe them, because you said them. But I never will or can believe that water becomes hard enough to be walked on. If the whole world told me so, I would not believe it. I see that you are trying to deceive me, and I will listen to you no more."—*Gwynne, "Seven Hundred Stories"*

288. Is your doubt honest? (v. 25)

Is there not a secret hidden reason at the heart of your refusal to accept Christ? A great evangelist once told me that after holding a most successful mission at Cambridge, one of the students asked him to visit a fellow student who was keenly interested in these matters, but would not go to the meetings. He had expressed a desire to see him, and as he was one of the ablest men in the college there was great desire that he should be spoken with. My friend saw him, and after a bit the student began to put forward some of the intellectual difficulties he had in accepting Christ, the inspiration of Scriptures, the Divinity of Christ, etc. The evangelist listened and said: "Yes, I have often dealt with these difficulties, and am willing to discuss them with you all night; but before I go to them there is one question I would like to put to you: If I can succeed in clearing your doubts away, will you engage tomorrow evening at my meeting to make a public confession of Christ?" The man was silent for a moment, and then said he could hardly make a promise like that. "Then," said the evangelist, "if that is so, there is no use in our wasting time further tonight; for with the heart man believeth, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation," and took his leave.

The treatment was severe but wise. The man was suffering from moral cowardice, though he knew it not, and hiding it under a covering of doubts. How often men do that! I could tell you many from my own experience. They were halting at the kingdom from a moral weakness, but they deluded themselves that the cause was intellectual.—*Mackay*

289. Thomas. (v. 25)

There is a quaint old legend which tells how some years after the event, Thomas was again troubled with agonizing doubts as to our Lord's resurrection. He sought the apostles, and began to pour his soul's troubles into their ears. But first one, then the other, looked at him in astonishment, and told the

unhappy doubter that he was sorry for him, but really he had so much to do he had no time to listen to his tale. Then Thomas would fain have imparted his woes to some of the women. But they, as busy as Dorcas, and in like employment, soon made him understand that they had no leisure for such thoughts as these. At last it dawned upon him that perhaps it was because they were so busy that they were free from the doubts which tortured him. He took the hint; he went to Parthia, occupied himself in preaching Christ's gospel, and was never troubled with doubts any more.

290. The skeptic convinced. (v. 25)

The great astronomer Kirchner, had a friend who denied the existence of a God. One day he called on the astronomer when he saw in one corner of his room a very beautiful celestial globe, and inquired whose it was and who made it. "It is not mine," said Kirchner, "and I do not think anybody made it. It must have come there by chance and of its own accord." "Ridiculous!" said his friend, "What is the use of such a reply?" "Why," he rejoined, "you cannot believe that this little imperfect piece of workmanship sprung into existence of itself; how then can you imagine that the glorious heavens which this merely represents could have sprung into being of their own accord?" The arrow entered his heart, he became a servant of that God whose existence he had denied.

291. Behold My hands. (v. 27)

Great interest has lately been evoked by the study of the thumb and the use made of it in detecting criminals, and in various other forms of identification. Doubtless, there is an element of truth in the science of palmistry, or chiromancy, notwithstanding all the charlatanry, superstition, and fraud associated with it. Think what this world would be if men had no hands! Where then were our painting, our music, and our statuary? The hands are a key to character oftener than we suppose. The hand-shake is revelatory of the man. The whole soul may go into the palm. The hand-shake is often more meaningful than a sermon. How significant is such a shake from the warm and cushionary hand of a friend! How repulsive is the cold, clammy, fishlike touch of some other hands! Now, lift that thought up to the hands of Jesus. What must have been the touch of his hands, as he laid them on the heads of little children! How soothing, healing, and heartening, as they were laid on the sick, the sorrowing, and the sinful! Behold with me this morning the hands of Jesus. Let us

accept his invitation to Thomas, "Behold my hands." When He gives this invitation, we are more than warranted in accepting it; indeed, we are verily guilty, if we refuse the invitation. Let us reverently study the hands of Jesus. Holy Scripture will be our best guide in this study. Tradition tells us that the Evangelist Luke was a painter. All the Evangelists were painters in that they so truthfully, vividly, and beautifully painted the portrait of Christ.

292. Surrender necessary. (v. 28)

A French officer whose ship had been taken by Nelson was brought on board Nelson's vessel and he walked up to the great admiral and extended his hand.

"No," said Nelson, "your sword first, please."

That is the Gospel. Many people would take Christ's hand and say He is a noble character. No, that is not enough. That is not the step in its right order. Give up your rebellious will first. Admit your guilt. Your sword first. Then Christ will take your hand, and never let go.

293. Faith without understanding. (v. 29)

"I will not believe anything but what I understand," said a young man in a hotel one day. "Nor will I," said another. "Neither will I," chimed a third. "Gentlemen," said one who was on a journey, and who sat close by, "do I understand you correctly, that you will not believe anything that you don't understand?" "I will not," said one; and so each one of the trio said. "Well," said the stranger, "in my ride this morning, I saw some geese in a field eating grass: do you believe that?" "Certainly," said the three unbelievers. "I also saw pigs, cows, and sheep, eating grass: do you believe that?" "Of course," was again replied. "Well, but the grass which they had formerly eaten had, by digestion, turned to feather on the backs of the geese, to bristles on the backs of the swine, to wool on the sheep, and on the cows it had turned to hair: do you believe that, gentlemen?" "Certainly," they replied. "Yes, you *believe it*," he rejoined; "but do you understand it?" They were confounded, silent, and evidently ashamed.

The Second Sunday after Easter

John 10: 11-16

294. Christ a shepherd. (v. 11)

He is the Good Shepherd that laid down his life for the sheep (John 10: 11); the Great Shepherd that was brought again from the dead (Heb. 13: 20); the Chief Shepherd who shall appear again (I Peter 5: 4); the Shepherd and Bishop of souls (I Peter 12: 25); He is the Shepherd of the sheep, who gathers the lambs with His arm, and carries them in His bosom (John 10; Isaiah 40: 11); the Shepherd of Israel (Ezekiel 34: 23); Jehovah's Shepherd (Zechariah 13: 7).—*John Bate*

295. The Good Shepherd. (v. 11)

I once saw a drove of sheep looking very tired and weary, being hurried on by a shepherd and his dogs; and when they wanted to stop and drink at a brook by the wayside, they were not allowed to, but driven on. I felt that it was very unkind of that shepherd; by and by they stopped before a pair of very handsome gates, and the flocks were turned into beautiful green pastures, with a clear stream running through them. Then I knew that I had been hasty; that the shepherd had not been unkind, but kind, in not allowing his sheep to drink from the muddy stream in the road, for he had been saving them and taking them on to something better. So with our heavenly Father, our Shepherd; he is compelled to deny us sometimes, while leading us unto better things.—*Moody*

296. Jesus knows us. (v. 14)

At the time of General Foch's visit to New York one of the daily papers of that city published a very telling picture; a young soldier standing in an upper window looking down on a crowded street, watching Foch pass in a car. The returned man was leaning on crutches and one leg was off at the knee. Below the picture was written, "His first view of Foch." He had been "over across" and fought with the rest till a shell found him. But war is so tremendous a thing, that though he had done his full duty he had never in any way come in touch with his commander-in-chief.

Some people talk of God and of His Son as though they were so mighty that we could never know them personally. General Foch was not to blame for not knowing our hero. His heart was all right but he was only human. The heart of Jesus is

wonderful and He is more than human. He is the infinite Christ that can be known by every son of man.

297. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. (v. 15)

Out on one of the great sheep-ranges of the north-west of America, a shepherd was left in a very lonely station in charge of a large flock of sheep. He lived in a little cottage which was fitted up with the necessary comforts for all seasons of the year. There was no other house anywhere near. This man, Hans Nielson, lived there with only his dog Shep for company. After he lived out there for two years there came a dreadfully severe winter. The sheep-sheds were old, and the shelter for the sheep was poor. New sheds were to be built in the following spring. It was hard work for Hans, but he succeeded in saving all his sheep until the last and most violent blizzard of all. The wind blew and the snow fell for three days. After it was over, help was sent from headquarters to see how Hans had fared. They found his dead body near the sheep-folds and his dog standing on guard by his master. The sheep were all alive and well, and it was quite clear to the men that Hans had been trying to place additional protection at the broken places in the old sheds when his brave battle ceased and he was overcome by the intense cold. He might have saved his life by neglecting the sheep, but he had literally given his life for his sheep.—*J. Learmont*

298. The Good Shepherd. (v. 15)

A gentleman traveling in the lonely part of the highlands of Scotland was attracted by the bleating of a ewe, as the animal came from the roadside, as if to meet him. When nearer she redoubled her cries and looked up into his face as if to ask for assistance. He alighted from his gig and followed her to a considerable distance from the road where he found a lamb completely wedged in between two large stones, and struggling with its legs uppermost. He took out the sufferer and placed it on the green sward, when the mother, seemingly overjoyed, poured forth her thanks in a long-continued bleat.

The Good Shepherd giveth His life for His sheep. He rejoices more at the safety of the lost sheep than over the ninety and nine that were safe in the fold.

299. They know His voice. (v. 4)

One of the occupations in Australia is sheep-raising. There are large ranches upon which many sheep and lambs find food, and the shepherds guard their own.

One day a man was arrested for stealing a sheep. The man claimed that the sheep was his own, that it had been missing from his flock for some days, but as soon as he saw the animal he knew him.

The other man claimed the sheep, and said he had owned him since he was a lamb, and that he had never been away from the flock.

The judge was puzzled how to decide the matter. At last he sent for the sheep. He first took the man in whose possession the sheep was found to the courtyard, and told him to call the sheep.

The animal made no response, only to raise his head and look frightened, as if in a strange place and among strangers.

Bidding the officers take the man back to the court-room, he told them to bring down the defendant. The accused man did not wait until he entered the yard, but at the gate, and where the sheep could not see him, he began a peculiar call. At once the sheep bounded toward the gate, and by his actions showed that a familiar voice was calling.

"His own knows him," said the judge.

300. He calleth His own sheep by name. (v. 3)

Mr. Wanamaker always remembered the men, women, and children of Bethany (Sunday school and church) in his absences. He carried a little book in which were written the names and addresses of the 1,100 members of the brotherhood, nearly all of the 5,400 Sunday school children, and nearly all of the 3,600 members of the church. These names were arranged alphabetically, and each day when he was traveling he would sit down with his book and, beginning the first day with letter A, uttered each name aloud and repeated to himself the individual circumstances of each in which prayer and help were otherwise needed. He continued this daily until he had exhausted the list. His idea in doing this was to recall to his mental vision the face of each. "And thus," said the one who told me this, "no wonder Mr. Wanamaker knew us all by name, called us all by our first names—Tom, and Harry, and Jim,—and remembered the particular troubles or joys of each."—*The Christian Herald*

301. I am the door. (v. 9)

Dr. George Adam Smith was looking at a sheepfold on a hill in Palestine. As he was talking to the shepherd he noticed the hole in the wall around the fold through which the sheep went. He looked about for the piece of wood that would be

used for the door. Seeing none, he turned to the shepherd and said: "Where is the door?" "Oh," replied the shepherd, "I am the door."

302. He find me

Yam Sing, on his examination for membership in a Protestant church in San Francisco, was asked: "How did you find Jesus?" and answered: "I no find Jesus at all; He find me." Yam Sing passed.

303. All we like sheep have gone astray. (v. 16)

My noble brother in Christ, the great John A. Broadus, told me that as he was about to enter the gate of Jerusalem he heard the crying of a baby, and, a short distance away, he saw it, a wee baby lying in a basket crying. Realizing that it was a deserted babe, the great man of God started to pick it up, when, just then, some men cried, "Leper! Leper! Leper!" That meant that it was a leper babe. He said the babe was beautiful, without any outward indication of disease. But the seeds of leprosy were there; that meant that that being would eventually die from the dread disease, its life having been eaten away by inches. The babe was beautiful then, but, oh! the fearful difference twenty years afterwards! And so, refined, cultured sinner, there may be, in your case, no repulsive outward manifestations of the leprosy of sin; but what will you be in your character, ten thousand years after you shall have died?—*T. T. Martin*

304. I am the door. (v. 9)

The old city of Troy had but one gate. Go round the city, and you could find no other. If you wanted to get in, there was but one way, and no other. So to the strong and beautiful city of heaven there is but one gate, and no other. Do you know what it is? Christ says, "I am the Door."—*J. L. Nye*

305. One fold and one Shepherd. (v. 16)

In the Revised Version this reads: And they shall become one flock, one shepherd. One point in the Greek cannot be preserved in the English. The words for flock and shepherd are cognate and very similar; one herd, one herdsman would be the nearest approach we could make.

The Third Sunday after Easter

John 16: 16-23

306. Only in the winter time. (v. 16)

"Can you see the castle?" I once asked of two humble cottagers, who lived in a little house not far from one of "the stately homes of England;"—"Can you see the castle?" And they answered me, "Only in the winter time!" When the green foliage was thick and massy the castle was hidden, but when the nipping winter began to strip the trees and lay them bare the castle came into view. "Only in the winter time," said my humble friends. And it is when the foliage round our life is thick and plentiful, and we are embosomed in summer fulness and glory, that God's castle is so frequently hidden, and we lose mind of the spiritual and eternal. And then He sends an apparently cruel and kindly winter, our trees are stripped and bared, and in our impoverishment we see our Father's house! "And there arose a mighty famine in that land. . . . . And he said, How many hired servants of my father!" The castle was in view! O, kindly, sable ministry, that opens our souls to the Infinite.—*J. H. Jowett*

307. A little while and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me. (v. 19)

A gentleman was asked by an artist friend of some note to come to his home, and see a painting just finished. He went at the time appointed, was shown by the attendant into a room that was quite dark, and left there. He was much surprised, but quietly waited developments. After perhaps fifteen minutes his friend came into the room with a cordial greeting, and took him up to the studio to see the painting which was greatly admired. Before he left the artist said laughingly, "I suppose you thought it queer to be left in that dark room so long." "Yes," the visitor said, "I did." "Well," his friend replied, "I knew if you came into my studio with the glare of the street in your eyes you could not appreciate the fine coloring of the picture. So I left you in the dark room till the glare had worn out of your eyes."

Many are the dark periods in life, when we see no fruition of our hopes and prayers, but oh, when the final glory is revealed to us, it will be the more glorious because of our periods of affliction. God help you and me to pray unceasingly and finally to see the fruition of our hopes.

308. Trials. (v. 20)

In the ancient times, a box on the ear given by a master to a slave meant liberty; little would the freed man care how hard was the blow. By a stroke from the sword the warrior was knighted by his monarch; small matter was it to the new made knight, if the hand was heavy. When the Lord intends to lift His servants into a higher stage of spiritual life, He frequently sends them a severe trial; He makes His Jacobs to be prevailing princes, but He confers the honor after a night of wrestling, and accompanies it with a shrunken sinew. Be it so: who among us would wish to be deprived of the trials, if they are the necessary attendants of spiritual advancement?

309. Tribulation conducive to growth. (v. 20)

A scientist once found the pupa of a butterfly. He placed it in the window in the sunshine that it might the sooner hatch. One day he saw the butterfly struggling to come out. The head and forward part of the body was out. The rest of the body didn't seem able to extricate itself. The scientist became interested in what it was that held the butterfly fast to the pupa. He found that it was two little threads. Meaning well, he took a scissor and cut them off. But what happened? The butterfly, which now came out of its pupa, was beautiful and well formed on its forward wings, but the back part of the body was stunted and showed only hints of beautiful, rich colors. The development had been arrested. The butterfly fluttered weakly with its wings and then fell to the floor dead. The threads should not have been cut off. They should have been torn off in the natural way.

310. Sorrow. (v. 20)

There are many fruits that never turn sweet until the frost has lain upon them; there are many nuts that never fall from the bough of the tree of life till the frost has opened and ripened them; and there are many elements of life that never grow sweet and beautiful till sorrow touches them.—*H. W. Beecher*

311. Affliction. (v. 20)

It is from the dark clouds in our sky that the showers of blessing come.

312. Ministry of difficulties. (v. 20)

Lord Kelvin, when an experiment failed, as experiments will do, even when conducted by experts, was accustomed to say to his students: "Gentlemen, when you meet a difficulty, you are

on the eve of discovery." Difficulties have been called the sentinels that guard God's treasure. The Almighty sometimes closes a door in order that men may the better train their muscles in prying it open. This is true both as to theoretic problems for thought and practical questions of duty. *Ad astra per aspera*—"To the stars through difficulties!" Let the perplexed thinker, or the discouraged saint, remember that, either in the search for truth or the service of mankind, a delay may not be a defeat.—*"Zion's Herald"*

313. Affliction. (v. 20)

The steel that has suffered most is the best steel. It has been in the furnace again and again. It has been on the anvil; it has been tight in the jaws of the vise; it has felt the teeth of the rasp; it has been ground by emery; it has been treated and hammered and filed until it does not know itself, and it comes out a splendid knife.

314. Sorrow. (v. 20)

In the church of St. Nicholas in Amsterdam, Holland, there is said to be a wonderful chime of bells. If you go into the tower of the church you will see a man with wooden gloves on his hand pounding on a keyboard. As you listen you hear nothing but the clanging of the keys and the harsh deafening noise of the bells over your head. To you, standing there, the bells have no harmony or meaning whatever. But if you were standing out on the street a few blocks away you would be entranced by the beautiful harmony of the bells.

So it is with the afflictions and sorrows of life. Oftentimes they seem harsh, cruel, inexplicable. But in the after years, in the midst of the paradise of God, as we stand removed from these jangling noises of earth, they will have an entirely new meaning. We shall see then that the omniscient hand of God was producing sweet and harmonious music in our lives and we knew it not. Until that day, when faith shall be lost in sight, until we shall see face to face, may our daily prayer be: "Nearer my God to Thee."

315. Clouds necessary. (v. 20)

An unclouded life is, on this earth, an unblessed life. But there is no such thing as an unblessed life. God sees that every human life is enriched at one time or another with the safeguarding blessing of clouds. Then let us enter into the full blessing every time a cloud of any sort settles down upon us.

It is no new thought that clouds are as necessary to the earth as the sunshine; we all know this as we see the devastation that is wrought on fields and crops and rivers and springs by too much cloudless sunshine. But we forget it when God asks us to know the cooling, quieting, refreshing experience of the absence of all light save the light of His presence seen by faith. The earth is not blessed in spite of its clouds; it is blessed by its clouds. So let us remember that each time of darkness in our life is not God's withholding of His blessing, but God's sending of His blessing. How it must grieve Him when we decline to receive that which His love has prepared for us!

316. Conversion of General Howard. (v. 22)

Nothing General Howard ever said impressed me more than that response of his, after he had accepted Christ in the old barrack rooms at Tampa, kneeling before the table with his Bible on it, surrendering to Jesus. In the morning he met one of his officers, who said, "Howard, I hear you have become a Christian." "Yes," Howard replied, "I have, and I am not ashamed of it." "Why," said the other, "I can show you a hundred inconsistencies in the Bible." "Perhaps you can," said Howard, "but you can't show me that last night I did not surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ, and I have been so happy I couldn't sleep. I can wait God's time for the explanation of the inconsistencies."

The Fourth Sunday after Easter

John 16: 5-15

317. He will convict the world of sin. (v. 8)

Many are convinced of sin, yet fascinated by it. Prof. Charles Rice, the botanist, once had a most thrilling experience with a monster rattlesnake. He was on a botanical expedition with a fellow scientist, and was sleeping in an open tent. He was aroused from his slumbers, one morning, to find to his horror a large rattlesnake coiled on his chest with its head raised to strike at the least movement. While he realized his awful danger, the eyes of the snake seemed to fascinate him, and left him powerless to think or act in any way to save himself. The strain was so great that he mercifully swooned away, and his companion on awakening discovered the snake and destroyed it.

There are many times when people are conscious of their sins, and yet are so fascinated by their evil habits that they seem powerless to break away from them, or crush them out of existence; but if we will breathe a prayer to Christ we shall never lack his help in delivering us from the deadly danger of our sins.

318. He will convict the world of sin. (v. 8)

Under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, conscience works after the manner so beautifully set forth in the ring that a great magician, according to an Eastern tale, presented to his prince. The gift was of inestimable value, not for the diamonds and rubies and pearls that gemmed it, but for a rare and mystic property in the metal. It set easily enough on the finger in ordinary circumstances, but as soon as its wearer formed a bad thought, designed or committed a bad action, the ring became a monitor. Suddenly contracting, it pressed painfully on his finger, warning him of sin.

319. The work of the Holy Ghost. (v. 10)

Let us think of that bold scheme which has been suggested to cut a canal across the narrow range of hills that bounds the Atlantic Ocean and let in its waters over the Sahara desert, turning its thirsty sand into an inland sea, where the sails of many nations might spread and carry with them civilization and progress. Such is the work of God the Holy Ghost, to

change and alter and improve the souls of men, so that where were barrenness and desolation there may be health and usefulness, the blue waves and the white-winged ships, in place of the parching sand and the weary camel.

320. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. (v. 12)

I was reading recently of a naturalist roaming about the country in search of specimens. He stopped near a farmhouse and filled his bottle with brackish water from a muddy pond. While doing this he remarked to a farmhand who stood watching him, what wonderful things a microscope would reveal in that water. "Within this pool," said he, "are a hundred, nay, a million universes, had we the sense of the instrument by which we could apprehend them."

The man with the hoe, unmoved by this remarkable statement, replied: "I know the water be full of tadpoles, but they be easy to catch." He saw only tadpoles, where the educated naturalist saw miracles of nature.

So it is in undertaking to inculcate great spiritual truths; it is impossible to do so if the inner eye is blinded, or the inner ear deafened by ignorance of spiritual things, and given over to only material and worldly thoughts.

321. Guidance of the Holy Spirit. (v. 13)

He to His own a Comforter will send,
The promise of the Father, who shall dwell
His Spirit within them, and the law of faith
Working through love, upon their hearts shall write,
To guide them in all truth.—*John Milton*

322. All things that the Father hath are mine. (v. 15)

The late Dr. Andrew Bonar of Glasgow was recognized in his day as one of the most saintly men in Scotland, as well as one of its most distinguished scholars. During one of D. L. Moody's early missions in Scotland Dr. Bonar had been speaking to the people daily for some weeks and with great blessing to the people. One day Mr. Moody said to him: "Dr. Bonar, I want you to tell us how you have been able to live the life you have been describing to us." The doctor only shook his head as a smile radiated his saintly face; but Mr. Moody was persistent in his demand. At last Dr. Bonar arose, and those who looked on him saw that his face shone as with the light of another world. In one brief sentence he said: "Brethren, I do not like

to speak of myself, but for fifty years I have had daily access to the throne of grace;" and after having spoken these words in the most simple manner he resumed his seat. Mr. George C. Stebbins, who was present, says in his "Memoirs and Reminiscences," that Dr. Bonar could not have said more had he spent the whole morning explaining the pathway that led him into the secret of a victorious life. It was the daily benediction of the grace of God.

The Fifth Sunday after Easter

John 16: 23-30

323. Our Lord's farewell discourse

It is fabled of a certain bird, that it reserves its most melodious notes until its dying hour, and yields up its life in ecstacies of pathetic song. In the case of our blessed Lord this is a sublime reality, for where in all the world do we find words that so touch the hearts of men as do the words of our Lord in His great farewell discourse.

324. Importance of prayer. (v. 23)

The illustrious Cardinal Ximenes, an humble Franciscan, taken from his cell and chosen by Providence to govern a great nation, had one day made an appointment at his palace with some of the grandees of the kingdom. There they were, talking, fidgeting, and growing impatient at having to wait. Suddenly, the Cardinal opened the door of the room where he was. It was a monastic cell, which was kept for his use, amidst the splendors of his residence. He approached his guests, and said with majesty: "You are impatient? I was at the foot of my crucifix. Remember, that *to pray is to govern.*"—*"Paillettes d'or"*

325. Prayer. (v. 23)

An American youth was sightseeing in France. One day he stepped into a church. While gazing reverently about a soldier entered. He was a quiet, gray man; and, though the collar on his shabby uniform bore the eagles of a general, only an orderly accompanied him. The youth was impressed by the promptness with which the soldier knelt in prayer; he was furthermore impressed by the length of time the man continued in prayer. For forty-five minutes that still, gray man remained in the presence of God. Rising from his knees, he left the church and walked down the street. The American lad, knowing that here was a man, whoever he might be, who did not lead an impromptu prayer life, followed him. Then the youth was quickly aware that this man's presence occasioned excitement; men saluted him with undisguised emotion, women and children regarded him with awe-struck faces. And why not? That

"gray man of Christ" was General Ferdinand Foch. While seeking orders from the Lord Christ, his word was law to millions of men; his whisper set thousands of guns thundering holy wrath and righteous indignation from countless hills.

"Sight-seeing?" Yea, verily! What finer sight in the universe than a human being at prayer, than a soul consciously uncovering itself in the presence of God? Nature has no "sight" comparable to this.

326. Prayer and safety. (v. 23)

Principal George Adam Smith tells a tale of how, in his early Alpine-climbing days, he was climbing one of the Swiss Alps on the sheltered side. Though they did not know it, a great wind was blowing; and as they climbed to the topmost crag, the guide, who had been leading the way upward, stepped back, as was his wont, that the traveler might have his foot first upon the top. Dr. Smith sprang up to the top of the peak, and was almost blown back over the edge by the wind. The guide seized him and brought him down to his knees, crying in his ear, "Down! Here, on the summit, you are only safe on your knees." So with the heights of our gladness, when life is splendid, and the world is full of glory, we are only safe upon our knees.—*D. B. Knox*

327. The radiophone and prayer. (v. 23)

One of the greatest inventions of the age is the radiophone. One can see the possibility of telegraphy, of dots and dashes being carried through a wire by electricity. One can conceive of the reasonableness of carrying voice vibrations over the telephone by means of electricity. But one stands perfectly amazed and astounded at the reality of picking up voice vibrations from the air by means of radio. If it has done anything for our faith, it has strengthened our belief in prayer. If men can speak with each other at a distance of hundreds of miles through the air without intervening connections, why cannot the Almighty hear the prayers that we offer Him.

Jesus felt the need of prayer. He spent so much time in prayer. Even through entire nights, He was in prayer with His Father. Prayer to Him was such a natural thing. He was so spiritually minded that He loved it.

Jesus as our leader in prayer gave a blessed promise concerning prayer, "Ask and it shall be given; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." Let us pray on, for our Father hears and answers prayer.—*Rev. John Y. Broek*

328. Prayer. (v. 23)

Prayer should be the key of the day, and the lock of the night. —*Bishop Berkely*

329. Pray one for another. (v. 23)

A missionary on leaving this country some years ago, was given a farewell service at a stopping place on his way to the steamer. He had made no appeal for money, but at the close, as persons grasped his hand, one well-meaning young man said to him, "We'll try to send you something more substantial than prayers." Quickly came the reply, in deep earnestness, "My friend, you can't do that. We shall be glad of anything you may send; but more than all else we need your daily prayers." The reasons why prayer is the greatest contribution we can ever make is that it releases God's energies. As Dr. Harpster said, "Its secret was in the six words, 'If ye ask, I will do.'"

330. Pray often. (v. 23)

We should pray often. Speaking about Daniel who, although a very busy man, always found time to pray, a certain worthy old pastor said to one of his parishioners: "If you have so much business to attend to that you have no time to pray, depend upon it you have more business on hand than God ever intended you should have."

331. Prayer. (v. 24)

Prayer is putting our hand in God's, telling Him what we would like, but wanting to know what He thinks best.

332. Ask and it shall be given you. (v. 24)

A young man in Scotland came one day to a gate, when the gatekeeper's little girl ran down and shut it, saying, "You have not to pay anything to pass. You have only to say, 'Please allow me to go through.'" The young man did as he was directed, and the gate was immediately opened. The owner just wished to preserve the right of the entrance, that was all. So, simply "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."—*Spurgeon*

333. Power of prayer. (v. 26)

Spurgeon tells of a woman who wanted the use of a school house for a Sunday school. The man to whom she had to apply was a sceptic; and before going to him, she asked God that she might have the house. She then asked the man and he said:

"No! The school house was built for secular learning, and we want none of your *Bible nonsense.*"

"Well," said the woman, "I didn't ask you first. I asked a higher one than you, and I believe I shall get what I want, because I mean to pray for it until I do; for, do you know that when I pray with all my heart, there is something that always gives way? Sometimes it is a man's health, sometimes his life, but always something; and I am certain when I get the full strain of prayer on, something will snap."

And something did snap. The man couldn't get the matter of this woman's praying out of his mind; and he sent word to her that she might have the house.

334. Sin a hindrance to prayer. (v. 26)

Suppose I had a private wire from my house and someone should go outside and drag the wire down until it touches the ground, a good square touch with the ground, the electricians would call it grounded. Could I telegraph over that wire? Almost any child knows I could not.

Suppose someone cuts the wire, a good clean cut. The two ends are apart: not a mile; not a yard; but distinctly apart. Could I telegraph on that wire? Of course not. Yet I might sit in my room and tick away by the hour wholly absorbed, and use the most beautiful and persuasive language, what good will it do? The wire is cut. All my fine pleading goes into the ground or the air. Now, *sin cuts the wire;* it runs the message into the ground.

Prayer is useless, sheer waste of breath, if you are separated from God.

The Ascension of Our Lord

Mark 16: 14-20

335. The Ascension

Churches which observe the Ecclesiastical Year call the day of our Lord's Ascension, Holy Thursday or Ascension Day. This day occurs forty days after Easter and ten days before Whitsunday. Perhaps the earliest reliable date for its observance is 390; it was then celebrated as an established custom in a suburb of Constantinople. After the Reformation, it was retained as one of the principal feasts in Anglican, Lutheran, and some other churches. In rural communities in parts of England and Scotland, there are many civic features connected with the day; the chief one of these is called "beating the bounds," or "riding the marches,"—the word "marches" meaning confines, limits, borders. The religious origin of this custom is largely forgotten. The idea was pagan in its origin; and, when the heathen were converted, the Christian priest took the place of the heathen enchanter.

It is the custom on this day for the boundaries of the parishes to be marked by boys following their seniors and bearing peeled willow wands. The practise once was soundly to whip one of the boys on the boundary-line, so as to make his memory more retentive of the location. A procession and other ceremonies are still maintained on Ascension Day in Russia and in Bavaria. In the New England colonies, the duties of marking boundaries were performed by officials who were known as "perambulators;" in early Virginia they were called "processioners." In English law, the local term for "beating the bounds" is "perambulation."

336. Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. (v. 15)

Mr. S. D. Gordon imagines that after Jesus went back to heaven, he and Gabriel had a conversation something like this:

Gabriel is saying: "Master, you died for the whole world down there, did you not?" "Yes." "You must have suffered much." "Yes." "And do they all know about it?" "Oh, no; only a few in Palestine know about it so far." "Well, Master, what have you done about telling the world that you have died for them? What is your plan?"

"Well," the Master is supposed to answer, "I asked Peter and James and John and Andrew, and some more of them down there, just to make it the business of their lives to tell others, and others, and yet others, and still others, until the last man in the farthest circle has heard the story."

And Gabriel is supposed to answer: "Yes — but — suppose Peter fails. Suppose after a while John simply does not tell others. Suppose their descendants, their successors away off in the first edge of the twentieth century, get so busy that they do not tell others, what then?"

And back comes the voice of Jesus, "Gabriel, I haven't made any other plans; I'm counting on them."

337. Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel

A Christian woman of Foochow, China, when in England, visited a cathedral. Noticing the date upon the oldest part of the building, she exclaimed, "What? do you mean to say you were Christians all those years and you never told me?" Is it any wonder she asked the question?

338. They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover. (v. 18)

Macauley tells us in the fourteenth chapter of his "History of England," that when our sovereigns "touched" for the King's Evil, a passage from the sixteenth chapter of the Gospel of St. Mark was read.

"When the words, 'They shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover,' had been pronounced, there was a pause; and one of the sick was brought up to the King. His Majesty stroked the ulcers and swellings, and hung round the patient's neck a white riband to which was fastened a gold coin. The other sufferers were then led up in succession; and as each was touched, the chaplain repeated the incantation: 'They shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover.' Then came the Epistle, prayers, antiphons, and a benediction. The service may be found in the prayer books of the reign of Anne. Indeed, it was not till some time after the succession of George, the First, that the University of Oxford ceased to reprint the Office of Healing together with the Liturgy."

Charles II, in the course of his reign, touched near a hundred thousand persons. In 1684, the throng was such that six or seven of the sick were trampled to death.

339. Comfort in a cloud. (v. 19)

A suffering believer once remarked to a friend: "When I am very low and dark I go to the window, and if I see a heavy cloud I think of those precious words, 'A cloud received Him out of their sight,' and I look up and I think, Well, that may be the cloud that hides Him. And so you see there is comfort in a cloud."

340. Looking heavenward

There were no windows made in the *sides* of the ark whereby to look out on the raging waters. There was but one window, and that was in the roof, through which to look up to heaven.

The Sunday after the Ascension

John 15: 26—16: 4

341. Ye also shall bear witness. (v. 27)

We can witness by our words. In our day we are getting away from this form of testimony. The dumb demon seems to have taken possession in many of our churches. As someone has said, "Many are like the rivers that flow into the North Sea,—frozen at the mouth." In spiritual matters they are tongue-tied; upon other things their tongues seem indeed to be tied, but tied in the middle, wagging both ways. A person can always talk about the thing he is interested in. That will be on his lips which is uppermost in his mind. When the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, they spoke with other tongues. It was not only a change of language, but also a change of theme.—*Lyon*

342. Ye also shall bear witness. (v. 27)

We can witness for Jesus by our works. Opportunities for this kind of testimony are much more numerous than most of us realize. A young lady came to me at the close of an afternoon service and seemed very enthusiastic to do some Christian work. "If I knew what to do," she said, "I would be glad to do it." "Well," said I, "I am told that there are many young mothers in this neighborhood that are not able to get out to any of the meetings. It would be an excellent plan if some of you Christian girls would go and offer your services to these mothers to remain with the little ones while they attend the meetings." The young lady looked very much surprised at my suggestion; she seemed to say: "Why, do you know who I am? I am a graduate of a great university! I come from one of the wealthiest homes in the city! You surely would not expect me to do a work like this! The children might have dirty hands and soil my fine gown!" In a few moments she turned and went away, having lost entirely her desire for Christian work. There is nothing she could have done to show more effectively the spirit of Christ.—*Lyon*

343. Tribulation defined. (v. 2)

We all know, in a general way, that this word (tribulation) means affliction, sorrow, anguish; but it is worth our while to know *how* it means this. It is derived from the Latin *tribulum,*

which was the threshing instrument or roller whereby the Roman husbandman separated the corn from the husks; and *tribulatio*, in its primary significance, was the act of this separation. But some Latin writer of the Christian Church appropriated the word and image for the setting forth of a higher truth; and sorrow, distress and adversity being the appointed means for separating, in men, of their chaff from their wheat, of whatever in them was light and trivial and poor from the solid and true, therefore he called their sorrows and their griefs *tribulatio*,—threshings, that is, of the inner, spiritual man, without which there could be no fitting him for the heavenly garner.—*Trench*

344. Trials necessary. (v. 2)

Fire, and hammer, and file are necessary to give the metal form; and it must have many a grind, and many a rub, ere it will shine: so, in trial, character is shaped and beautified and brightened.—*S. Coley*

345. Suffering

Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seamed with scars; martyrs have put on their coronation robes, glittering with fire, and through their tears have the sorrowful first seen the gates of heaven.

346. Duty and courage

A total eclipse of the sun was visible nearly a century ago in Connecticut. Candles were lighted in many houses; the birds were silent; and the people were impressed by the idea that the day of judgment was at hand. This opinion was entertained by the Legislature, at that time sitting at Hartford. The House of Representatives adjourned; the Council proposed to follow the example. Colonel Davenport objected. "The day of judgment," he said, "is either approaching, or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for an adjournment; if it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I wish, therefore, that candles may be brought."

347. Stand up for Jesus

In the last sermon I heard him preach, the late Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman related this incident: A Liverpool infidel was delivering a tirade against Christianity. Two shop-girls were passing and stopped to hear what he was saying. At the close of his address, after having "destroyed" the Christian faith, the infidel asked: "Does anybody want to say anything for Jesus Christ?"

One of the girls replied: "We can't speak much, but we can sing." And then the two sweet girl-voices sang clearly and beautifully:

"Stand up, stand up for Jesus
Ye soldiers of the Cross:
Lift high His royal banner,
It must not suffer loss!"

It was surpassingly eloquent, unforgettably impressive! "Ye shall be My witnesses," said the Lord. That is the essential thing for all of us,—just to bear witness unto His glorious Saviourhood in every place and relationship. — *Frederick R. Shannon*

348. Confessing Christ

A great many years ago a Roman emperor said to a Greek architect, "Build me a coliseum, and when it is done I will make your name famous through all the world." The work was done and a great host was gathered in the coliseum to celebrate it. And then they brought out some Christians who were ready to die for the truth, and the emperor said, "The coliseum is done, and we have come to celebrate it today by the putting to death of Christians, and we have come here to honor the architect." Whereupon the Greek architect sprang to his feet and shouted, "I also am a Christian." And they flung him to the wild beasts. Could you have confessed Christ in that way?

The Festival of Pentecost. Whitsunday

John 14: 23-31

349. Pentecost

Who has not heard the apt allusion once made to the manifest weakness of the present-day pulpit by Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst, of New York, when he affirms that "on the day of Pentecost three thousand sinners were converted under one sermon, while now it takes about three thousands sermons to convert one sinner." This brilliant allusion, of course, ignores the fact that the day of Pentecost was preceded by three years of the most thorough and persistent evangelistic preaching which the world has ever known. The ministry of Jesus, which ended in His rejection and Crucifixion, made Pentecost a possibility.

350. Pentecost

The Bible speaks in Pentecostal fashion to every man in the tongue in which he was born. It holds converse every day in the year with a multitude which no man can number, of all nations and peoples and kindreds and tongues.

351. The Personality of the Holy Spirit. (v. 26)

A young student preparing for Cambridge was assailed by a certain village skeptic, who sneered at the idea of the Holy Ghost being a person. "Personality of the Spirit!" said he; "Why, the Spirit is wind, breath, air: the very Greek word shows you this; for it simply means wind." "Be it so," replied the youth; "then be so good as to tell me the meaning of this passage, 'Except a man be born of water and of the wind he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the wind is wind.'" The skeptic had no answer; and the student concluded, "Your words are born of the wind, but not of the Spirit."

352. The Dove of Peace. (v. 27)

When the Huron Indians visited Quebec in 1633 and entered the Jesuit Chapel, they asked if the dove over the altar was the bird that makes the thunder.—*Francis Parkman, "The Jesuits in North America"*

353. Right relation to the Holy Spirit. (v. 26)

The question of the relation in which we live to the Holy Spirit is an all-important one. One of Frances Ridley Havergal's poems tells of an Aeolian harp which a friend sent her with a letter describing the wonderful sweetness of its tones. Miss Havergal took the harp and thrummed its strings, but there were no thrilling strains, only common music. She then read the letter again, and found instructions which she had overlooked at first. Then she raised the window and put the harp under the sash. Now the wind swept over the strings, and the room was filled with the melodious strains such as no fingers of man could have produced. Only when the breath of heaven blew upon the harp could its marvelous music be brought out. The human soul is such a harp. Human fingers call out much that is lovely and sweet; but it is only when the chords are swept by the breath of heaven, by the Holy Spirit, that its noblest music is brought out. The music came when the harp was in right relation with the wind. How important that we shall be in right relation with the Holy Spirit; that we get and stay where the breath of heaven can sweep over us!

"Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove,
With all Thy quickening powers;
Kindle a flame of sacred love
In these cold hearts of ours."

When in the right relation, the blessing comes. In speaking of a body of Christians who had earnestly been seeking in prayer for the Spirit's presence, one, in describing the experience that came to all, said: "A conscious wave of blessing was felt throughout the whole gathering." Another used these words in describing the experience of another company, met in a spiritual retreat: "A warm wave of blessing passed through the whole company." We are sure that there is such a thing, both in public worship and in the privacy of life, as being in such a relation to the Holy Spirit as to have His felt presence and great blessedness resulting.—*G. B. F. Hallock*

354. Jesus only gives peace. (v. 27)

Dr. T. L. Cuyler relates: "When the richest man who died in New York within my memory was on his dying bed he asked his attendants to sing for him. They sang the familiar old revival hymn, 'Come, ye sinners, poor and needy.' The dying millionaire said to them, in a plaintive tone: 'Yes, please sing that again for me. I am poor and needy.' Ah! what

could fifty millions of railway securities and bank stocks do for him on the verge of eternity? One verse out of the fourteenth chapter of John could bring him more peace than all the mines of California multiplied by all the bonds in the National Treasury. 'Poor and needy' was he? I count that one of the most pathetic sayings that ever fell from dying lips."

355. Christ our peace in trouble. (v. 27)

In India, where there are many venomous serpents, there is an animal, a kind of weasel, which is, as it were, appointed by God to destroy them. Put one of these creatures and the deadliest snake together, and let them begin the battle. Presently the weasel will be bitten by the serpent, and it will dart off into the next bush, will find the antidote to the poison, and will return to the fight. And so, again and again, till at last it seizes the snake and destroys it. That is strange in itself; but a thing yet stranger is this. A very large reward has been offered by the Government for the discovery of this antidote. If an animal can find it out, much more easily, one would think, can a man discover it. But it is not so. This creature has been watched again and again, but no one has ever yet been able to learn the remedy. God has given to it the knowledge which He has denied to us. And so the true servant of Christ knows where to go for a cure against all the troubles that may befall him; where to seek peace in all the storms that beset him. —*Dr. Neale*

356. Peace. (v. 27)

Two artists, according to Henry Drummond, vied with each other in picturing their idea of peace. One painted a picture of a still lake away up on the top of a mountain. That would not be peace but stagnation. A truer picture of peace would be a river flowing with stately and steady course through the varied and changing scenes of mountain, forest and field to its eternal rest in the ocean. The Christian life is one of activity and progress in an atmosphere of hidden calm. The other artist painted a picture of a roaring waterfall with a birch tree hanging over it and in the crotch of a limb bending over the turbulent waters and almost within touch of the rising spray a bird sitting calmly upon its nest. This is, indeed, a fitting illustration of the peace of Christ which triumphs over every disturbing and distracting element and makes the soul calm in the midst of storm.

357. Christ's legacy of peace. (v. 27)

There is only one power that can draw after it all the multitudinous heaped waters of the ocean, and that is the quiet silver moon in the heavens, which pulls the tidal wave into which merge all currents and swell breakers, as it rolls around the earth. And so, Christ, shining down, lambent and gentle, but changeless, will draw in one great surge of harmonized motion all the else contradictory currents of our stormy souls. "My peace I give unto you."—*Dr. Maclaren*

358. The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me. (v. 30)

The prince of this world came, and nothing found
In Thee, O Master; but, oh, woe is me!
He cannot pass me, on other business bound,
But, spying in me things familiar, he
Casts over me the shadow of his flight.—*George Macdonald*

359. The yearning of the soul

The mussel lies in the gutter covered with grime and dirt, robbed of its glory; but pick it up and hold it to your ear and you can hear a faint roaring, a quiet tone of longing for the wonders of its home world. Thus lives also in thee, O Soul, even if thou hast fallen in the mire and liest there pitiful, a hidden murmuring,—the ear of love hears it,—a homesickness, which the earth cannot appease.

The Festival of the Holy Trinity

John 3: 1-15

360. Derivation of trinity

The word "trinity" in its Latin form *trinitas,* is derived from the adjective *trinus,* "threefold," or "three in one." It is nowhere employed in Holy Scripture, but was a term invented and used as early as the second century, to express the doctrine by a single word, for the sake of brevity and convenience.—*Bishop Hall*

361. Glory to the Trinity

That holy man, St. Francis of Assisi, found appropriate expression to the ardent devotions of his soul in the constant repetition of the doxology, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen." He recommended the same exercise to others, who found it very helpful to spirituality.—*Foster's "Cyclopedia"*

362. Incomprehensibility of the Trinity

An infidel was scoffing at the doctrine of the Trinity. He turned to a gentleman and said, "Do you believe such nonsense?" "Tell me how that candle burns," said the other. "Why the tallow, the cotton, and the atmospheric air produce light," said the infidel. "Then they make one light, do they not?" "Yes." "Will you tell me how they are three, and yet but one light?" "No, I cannot." "But you believe it?" The scoffer was put to shame.—*Foster's "Cyclopedia"*

363. The Holy Trinity in the flag

The red, white, and blue of the British and American flags are said to have been originally the signs of the Trinity; white representing the holiness of God, blue the love of Christ, and red the fire of the Holy Spirit.

364. Nicodemus. (v. 1)

There is a Spanish legend, mentioned by Mr. Lecky in one of his early letters, that a crucifix in Burgos was carved by Nicodemus, and that it has raised ten men from the dead.

365. An audience of one. (v. 2)

Permenides upon reading a philosophical discourse before a public assembly at Athens, and observing that, except Plato, the whole company had left him, continued notwithstanding, saying that Plato alone was sufficient audience for him.—*W. Baxendale*

366. Bound by fear. (v. 2)

We have been told that if you trace on the floor a chalk line, and put a goose inside it, no inducement in the world can prevail on the goose to cross the appalling line. He will starve inside the magic circle, starve to death within sight of food, but he will not move! There are men and women who are more goose than the geese. The chalk marks of custom and convention have been traced for them in circles of flame by the fiery swords of seraphs. And they could more cheerfully face the real fires of martyrdom than brave the milk and water persecutions of their day and set.

367. The same came to Jesus by night. (v. 2)

Most blest believer he!
Who in that land of darkness and blinded eyes
Thy long expected healing wings could see,
When thou didst rise;
And, what can never more be done,
Did at midnight speak with the Sun!—*Henry Vaughan*

368. Anew (v. 3)

Scholars have debated earnestly concerning the meaning of the word which in our English translation is rendered "anew." It so happens that the word may mean either "anew" or "from above." Jesus undoubtedly had both ideas in mind when He used the term. They do not exclude each other. They supplement each other. They help us to understand what Jesus meant.

369. A new heart. (v. 3)

An Indian, hearing the Golden Rule explained, said: "It cannot be done." Then, after a pause, he added, "If the Great Spirit would give man a new heart, it might be done, but not else." That is the truth. To live the Golden Rule we need a golden heart.—*George Mahlon Miller*

370. Ye must be born again. (v. 3)

A phrenologist, lecturing in a certain town, declared his ability to tell any man's nature from his head. A rough-faced, stern-looking man mounted the platform. After a thorough examination of the subject, the lecturer described him as harsh, cold, and possessed of many disagreeable traits. The audience laughed derisively, for they knew their neighbor to be kind, genial, and benevolent. They told the professor that he had miserably failed to judge character by his science. But the man himself was not amused; turning to the people he said: "Friends, you have heard portrayed exactly my nature before Jesus took possession of me. If there is any change, the honor belongs to Him."

371. The new birth. (v. 3)

The man who desires to enter the army is first stripped and examined. Then, if accepted, he is dressed in a new uniform, and lays aside his former clothing. So the soldiers of Christ must strip. The old garment of sin must be laid aside, and "the wedding garment" of righteousness put on.

372. Spiritual influence. (v. 5)

When the father of the celebrated evangelist, Sam Jones, was lying on his death-bed, he made use also of the very last moments of his life to talk to his son, who was not converted. Death came nearer and nearer, and Sam, who was sitting beside his father's bed, became more and more serious. "Sam," said the aged man, in a tone of forgiving love, "Sam, will you promise me, that we shall see each other again, with your mother, before the throne of God?" The father's words touched the son's conscience. Weeping he fell down on his knees and cried: "I have sinned and am not worthy to be called your son. Forgive me that I may receive forgiveness also from God, and I promise to begin a new life from this day." The father looked as if he had been transfigured, placed his hand in blessing on the son's head and breathed his last. The father's death actually became the son's life.

373. Spiritual births. (v. 10)

Thorwaldsen, who is said to have been born in Copenhagen, when questioned as to his birthplace, replied, "I don't know; but I arrived in Rome, March 8, 1797," dating his birth, as it were, from the commencement of his artistic career. Shortly after Summerfield arrived in America he met with a distin-

guished doctor of divinity who asked him where he was born. "In Dublin and in Liverpool." "Oh! how can that be?" The boy-preacher paused a moment, and answered, "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?"—*S. H. Tyng*

374. The cross lifts up. (v. 14)

A heathen chief had heard the story of the cross, of the suffering and dying Jesus. He desired to know the saving power of the cross. He was taken sick unto death. He commanded his servants to make a cross. When this had been done he commanded them to lift him from his bed and place him on the cross. Then he told them to stretch his arms over the cross-beam and to fasten his feet at the lower end of the main-beam. After all this had been done he said, "Now let me die." As he lay there on the cross light from heaven streamed into his heart. His faith laid hold of Jesus as his personal Saviour, and with a face illuminated with a great joy, he cried out: "It lifts me! It lifts me! It lifts me up!" Glory to God! Jesus, lifted up, lifts up.

The First Sunday after Trinity

Luke 16: 19-31

375. Wanton extravagance. (v. 19)

"The age cannot be very good," remarked Hannah More, "when the strawberries at Lady Stormouth's breakfast last Saturday morning cost one hundred and fifty pounds."

376. Luxury disregarding suffering. (v. 19, 20)

Mlle. Taglione, the celebrated dancer, spent her last London season at Her Majesty's Theatre in 1847. She said she would not return to London, being dissatisfied with the admiration which she received. The season was exceptionally brilliant, "though it was said that bread was dear, and the misery of the people great." "One would never suspect it," said the famous dancer, "to see so many splendid equipages, and so many diamonds on the white shoulders of the ladies."

377. Indifference to suffering. (v. 19-21)

"There is a well-known picture by Gustave Dore," writes Dr. G. H. Morrison, "which portrays this parable of the rich man and the beggar. We are shown the rich man in the midst of Oriental luxury, and at the foot of the marble steps the diseased Lazarus. So far the picture is worthy of the genius; but Dore has introduced one other feature which shows that he has misread the Saviour's story. Over the beggar an Eastern slave is bending with a scourge of twigs in his uplifted hand. He has been bidden drive Lazarus away, for his misery is as a death's head at the feast. And Dore is wrong in introducing that, for our Lord does not hint that Dives was disturbed; he was not consciously and deliberately cruel; he was only totally and hopelessly indifferent. What wrought the ruin of that pleasure-lover was not inhumanity so much as inattention. The attitude of innumerable people toward the great question of the religious life is just the inattentive attitude of the rich man to Lazarus at his gate."

378. A pathetic death. (v. 22)

Sic transit gloria mundi.—What a pathetic description is that of Cardinal Mazarin, rousing himself from his dying bed at Vincennes to take a last look at the treasures which his long ascendency in the councils of the French monarchy had enabled him to accumulate. When his nurses and doctors were away

he rose from his couch, and with his tall figure, pale and wasted, closely wrapped in his fur-lined dressing gown, he stole into the gallery; and the Count de Brienne, who reports the scene, hearing the shuffling sound of his slippers as he dragged his limbs feebly and wearily along, hid himself behind the curtains. As, in his extreme weakness, the Cardinal had to halt almost at each step, he feebly murmured, "I must leave all this." He crawled on, however, clinging, so as to support himself, first on one object and then on another, and as at each pause, exhausted by pain and weakness, he looked around the splendid room, he said again, with a deep sigh, "I must leave all this." Then, at last, he caught sight of Brienne. "Give me your hand," he said, "I am very weak and helpless, yet I like to walk, and I have something to do in the library." And then, leaning on the count's arm, he again pointed to the pictures. "Look at that beautiful Correggio, and this 'Venus' of Titian, and this incomparable 'Deluge' of Antonio Caracci. Ah! my poor friend, I must leave all this. Good-bye, dear pictures, which I have loved so well!"—*Dean Liddon*

379. After death. (v. 22)

A small boy sat quietly in the corner of a railway carriage. It was a hot, dusty day, and a very long run for hours. But the little fellow sat patiently watching the fields and fences hurrying by. A motherly old lady leaned forward and asked sympathetically, "Aren't you tired of the long journey, dear, and the dust and the heat?"

The lad looked up brightly, and replied with a smile: "Yes, ma'am, a little. But I don't mind it much, because my father is going to meet me when I get to the end of it."

What a beautiful thought it is that we can look forward hopefully and trustfully, though tired of the weary way of life, and, like the lonely little lad, "not mind it much," because our Father too will be waiting to meet us at our journey's end!

And what will the Father say to us, and what shall we say to the Father? Shall we have any claim to His welcome but the deed of Him who died on the lone, lonely tree? None. None. "Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to Thy Cross I cling." Nothing to give to God but sin . . . sin and a redeemed life.

380. Where is hell? (v. 23)

"Where is hell?" was the question once asked by a scoffer. Brief but telling was the reply, "Anywhere outside of heaven." —*"Biblical Museum"*

381. Son, remember. (v. 25)

A man in an insane asylum, that I heard of a few years ago, kept continually crying: "If I only had! If I only had!" That was his only cry. The story was this: He was employed by a railway company, and had charge of a swing bridge. Some of the company sent word they were coming past in an express train at a certain hour. Several boatmen asked him to open near the time when the train was due. At first he resisted their requests, but at last he listened to them, and opened the bridge. Scarcely was it opened when he heard the train come tearing along, and it leaped into the jaws of death. Many of the people were killed. The man reeled and tottered, and went mad, and his cry was, "If I only had." I believe many a one in the prison house of hell is shrieking, "If I only had yielded to the power of the gospel; if I only had accepted salvation when offered; if I only had listened to the warning words."—*Moody*

382. Son, remember. (v. 25)

Among ancient manuscripts which modern research has brought to light, there are some, called by learned men palimpsests, in which it has ben discovered that what was originally a gospel or an epistle, or other book of Holy Scripture, had been written over by a mediæval scribe with the effusions of a profane poet; but now, by the application of some chemical substance, the original sacred record has been, and is used as an authority in settling the reading of disputed passages. So the pages of memory are palimpsests.—*W. M. Taylor*

383. Son, remember. (v. 25)

A man once offered to teach a philosopher the art of memory for five talents. "I will give you ten talents," was the reply, "if you will teach me the art of forgetting." Very touching is the old world fable that between earth and the happy plains of Elysium, the classical heaven, the river Lethe flows, and that whoever tastes its waters forgets all his past. The heathen knew that there could be no happiness hereafter unless somehow memory let go its hold of past sins. Gentle sleep owes its healing power to this, that it helps us to forget. Oh, to bury our dead past as men bury their dead out of their sight; for one sin vividly remembered has sometimes power to make the whole life bitter. "Forgetfulness," it has been said, "is the daughter of time," but our parable shows that she is not always the daughter of eternity, as forgetting is impossible to the unpardoned.—*J. Wells*

384. You can't rub it out! (v. 25)

"Don't write there," said a little newspaper boy to a dandified youth, whom in the waiting room of a railway station he saw about to scratch something with his diamond ring on a mirror that was hanging on the wall. "Don't write there!" "Why not?" "Because you can't rub it out!" So would I have you, my unconverted hearer, to be careful what you write, in your words and actions, on the tablets of your memory. You can't rub it out! and as you think of that surely you will agree with me that "the time past of your lives may suffice to have wrought the will of the Gentiles."—*W. M. Taylor*

385. The bridge will hold. (v. 26)

Sven Lidman, a Swedish writer, tells about a godly woman in Stockholm and her last words. She had lived her entire life for the Master. Her final work of mercy was the founding of an orphanage and at the age of forty-two she entered into rest.

Assembled around her death-bed were a few intimate friends. They thought that the last spark of life had been extinguished, when suddenly the dying woman recovered her senses, looked around upon her friends with a tender and loving smile, and with her usual confidence and thoughtfulness requested those present to bring her greeting to the members of the church, that they might have a share in her experiences from the other side:

"Greet the friends that the bridge will hold!"

She then closed her eyes, never again to see this world, and stepped onto the bridge which spans the gulf that is fixed between us and the other world.

386. If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. (v. 31)

If our discretion tells us how to live,
We need no ghost a helping hand to give;
But if discretion cannot us restrain,
It then appears a ghost would come in vain.—*Crabbe*

The Second Sunday after Trinity

Luke 14: 16-24

387. The invitation in our day. (v. 16)

There has been in recent years too great latitude in the matter of religious teaching and preaching. What we need is not less preaching but more; but preaching that deals with the fundamentals and essentials of religion and that recognizes that faith is one of its indispensable requisites. Topical and eccentric preaching has had its day and lost its force; and along with ecclesiastical vaudeville, must give place to something stronger and more persuasive.

388. Come, for all things are now ready. (v. 17)

It was the custom in the earlier ages to issue invitations to a feast several weeks before the event, and when the day arrived, and all preparations were completed, a runner was sent out to inform those bidden, that all the details were arranged, and the master says, "Come."

So the blessed Christ came, announcing the kingdom of heaven as at hand; and when the last pang upon the Cross went out, He said: "It is finished." "Let every one that thirsteth come." "All things are now ready." "The avenues of eternal salvation are opened, an offended God is reconciled, all arrangements are now complete. Come."

This invitation is personal to you, my friend. Will you take it and come to Jesus?

389. They all began to make excuse. (v. 18)

Excuses are easily made. There is no action so trivial, no crime so great, but the selfish heart can frame an excuse for it. But are these excuses valid? Will our self-vindication absolve us at the judgment seat of Christ? "He knoweth our hearts." They are not even satisfactory to ourselves, much less to God. Sinner, if you have a valid excuse for impenitence, write it out; nay, cast it in brass, hang it up in your house; delight in it, for it is your saviour; and teach it to others, that they may share your joy. When you come to die, take it with you down into the grave; when the trump of God calls the dead to judgment, convey it to the throne, and show it to the judge. If it will justify you in life, it will excuse you in eternity.

390. Excuses. (v. 18)

A certain man made a great supper and bade many, and sent his servant at supper-time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready.

And they all, with one consent, began to make excuses.

The first said unto him, I am doing a big business and it takes all of my time. I pray thee have me excused.

And another said, We have a baby at home, and it takes two to manage it. I pray thee have me excused.

And another said, The Sunday papers are very big now, and leave no time for anything else. Therefore I cannot come.

And another said, It seems impossible to get a dressmaker at present. I pray thee have me excused.

And another said, I don't like the other guests who are invited. Please excuse me.

So that servant came and showed his lord these things.

Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the dramshops, and back alleys, and bum places of the town, and bring in hither the jagged and the broken and the much despised. For I say unto you, that none of these men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.—*"Emanuel Messenger"*

391. Excuses for not going to church. (v. 18)

One of the most familiar excuses is: "When I was a boy my parents made me go until I became tired of it." Did your parents make you wash your face when you were a little boy? Did they make you clean your shoes? Then why do you do them now? Shame on you to blame your own meanness and neglect on your godly, Christian parents.

392. And they all began to make excuse. (v. 18)

I said one day to a respectable tradesman, "When are you going to begin to think of eternity and come to the house of God?" His reply I shall never forget; "I know, sir, that I ought to come, but it's no use; my mind is full of business, I can think of nothing else."—*Thain Davidson*

393. Theories and excuses are of no value when you come to die. (v. 18)

Someone tells the story of a philosopher crossing a stream. As he entered the ferry boat he picked up a pebble and asked the ferry man: "Do you know geology?" "No." The learned man said: "Then one fourth of your life is lost." As they

went along he picked up a leaf that was floating in the stream and said: "Do you know botany?" "No." "Then one half of your life is lost." They reached mid-stream and the philosopher looked up to the starry heavens with the query: "Do you know astronomy?" "No, sir." "Then," said the philosopher, "three fourths of your life is lost." Just then the ferry man looked up the stream and saw a wall of water coming down upon them; the dam had burst. He turned to the philosopher and said: "Sir, do you know how to swim?" "No." "Then," said the ferry man, "the whole of your life is lost."

394. Excuses of no account. (v. 18)

If we could only remember that God sees us and that our excuses are of no account. Did you ever look into a glass beehive and observe the motions of the little creatures inside? Well, now, this world is nothing but a huge glass beehive. God looks down on us and sees us all. We go into our little cells in the streets of a large city; we go to our business, our pleasure, our devotions, and our sins; but we cannot get away from the Lord's observation.

395. Excuses. (v. 18)

When Lord Kitchener was in Egypt one of his subordinates came to him to explain why a certain order given to him the day before had not been carried out. There were any number of reasons, he said, why the thing could not be done. Kitchener listened for three minutes and then cut him short saying: "Your reasons are excellent. In fact, I think they are about the best reasons I have ever heard. Now go and do it and then report to me tomorrow that the work is completed." When the sun rose the next day the thing was done. He was a man who never excused himself or others and he will go down in history as "Kitchener of Khartoum, the man who did things."—*Dean Brown*

396. Compel them to come in. (v. 23)

To extend hospitality in genuine Syrian fashion is no small undertaking. Brevity on such occasion is the soul of stinginess. Oriental effusiveness and intensity of speech are never more strenuously exercised than at such times. The brief form of the American invitation, "I should be pleased to have you dine with us, if you can," however sincere, would seem to an Oriental like an excuse to escape the obligation of hospitality. Again, the ready acceptance of an invitation in the West would seem to the son of the East utterly undignified. Although the

would be guest could accept, he must be as insistent in saying, "No, I can't," as the would be host in saying, "Yes, you must."

Approaching his hoped for guest, a Syrian engages him in something like the following dialogue, characterized by a glow of feeling which the translation can only faintly reveal:

"Ennoble us by your presence."

"I would be ennobled but I cannot accept."

"That cannot be."

"Yea, yea, it must be."

"No, I swear against you by our friendship and by the life of God. I love just to acquaint you with my bread and salt."

"I swear also that I find it impossible to accept. Your bread and salt are known to all."

"Yea, do it just for our own good. By coming to us you come to your own home. Let us repay your bounty to us."

"By the mercy of God I have not bestowed any bounty upon you worth mentioning."

Here the host seizes his guest by the arm and with an emphatic, "I will not let you go," pulls at him and would drag him bodily into his house. Then the guest, happy in being vanquished "with honor" consents to the invitation.

Do you now understand fully the meaning of the words "compel them to come in?"—*Rihbany, "The Syrian Christ"*

397. No provision for defeat. (v. 23)

It used to be said of the Duke of Wellington, that in the orders which he issued to the brigadiers he never made any provision for defeat. He said "Go, and capture that hill from the French," or, "Go, and drive the enemy from that house;" and he never told them what to do if they failed. It was their business to do it, and he never made any provision for defeat; and they did succeed. So, too, Christ, in the parable of the feast makes no provision for defeat. Cheerful, spirited, Christian work cannot fail.—*H. P. Hughes*

The Third Sunday after Trinity

Luke 15: 1-10

398. Luke fifteen

Every pastor enjoys to preach over this text and the following verses about the Prodigal Son, for they show us the love of God for sinners. Some pastors were preaching the Gospel to the poor in the theatres of London and one after the other when he came to conduct the service began to read the fifteenth chapter of Luke. This happened so many times in succession that the people smiled and wondered if they were to hear only that message. Finally it became necessary to make a rule that no pastor who preached for that society should take his text from this chapter. It is not to be wondered at that this chapter was such a favorite, for it is the very marrow of the Gospel.

399. Christ's demeanor towards sinners. (v. 2)

The heathen philosopher Seneca made a practice of dining with his slaves, and when challenged for an innovation so directly in the teeth of all customary proprieties and so offensive to the Roman mind, he defended himself by saying that he dined with some because they were worthy of his esteem, and with others that they might become so. The action and its defence were alike admirable, and read a salutary lesson to the aristocrats of Rome. But it was even a greater shock to the Pharisees, and if possible even more unaccountable, that Jesus should prefer the society of notorious sinners to their own irreproachable manners and decorous conversation.

400. The worst capable of much. (v. 2)

White paper is made of dunghill rags. God can so work the heart of the vilest wretch with beating and purifying as it shall be fit to write His laws upon.—*N. Rogers*

401. Until He find it. (v. 4)

Do you recall the story that came from across the seas some years ago of a young Italian count who, upon the eve of his marriage with a royal princess, disappears? Great search was made for him. Even the King of Italy's detectives were set at work. Finally, after a number of months, his mother and sister, continuing their search, found him, where do you suppose? In an orchestra at Atlantic City, N. J., playing the trombone. Through their persuasion he returned with them. Note that mother love would not give him up, but kept on until she found

him. So it is said of the Good Shepherd in regard to the lost sheep. "Until he find it."

402. Christ finding the lost. (v. 4)

Mr. Moody was preaching in the big tent during the Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

The text was, "The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." When the sermon was ended, a police officer lifted a little boy out of the throng. He had been discovered evidently lost amid the crowd. Mr. Moody took the little fellow in his arms, and, standing before the multitude, asked the people to look at the lost child. "This boy has a father who is no doubt at this moment looking for him," said Mr. Moody. "The father is more anxious to find the boy than the boy is to be found. It is just so with our heavenly Father. He is seeking us today; seeking us with unspeakable solicitude."

Just then a man with pale face and excited, eager movements was seen elbowing his way to the platform.

As he reached it, the little fellow saw him, ran quickly across the platform, and threw himself into his father's outstretched arms.

The crowd burst into a mighty cheer.

"Thus," cried Mr. Moody, "will God receive you, if you will only run to Him today. The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

403. Seeking a lost sheep. (v. 4)

One evening in 1861, as General Garibaldi was going home, he met a Sardinian shepherd lamenting the loss of a lamb out of his flock. Garibaldi at once turned to his staff, and announced his intention of scouring the mountain in search of the lamb. A grand expedition was organized. Lanterns were brought, and old officers of many a campaign started off full of zeal to hunt the fugitive. But no lamb was found, and the soldiers were ordered to their beds. The next morning Garibaldi's attendant found him in bed fast asleep. The attendant waked him. The general rubbed his eyes; and so did his attendant when he saw the old warrior take from under the covering the lost lamb, and bid him convey it to the shepherd. The general had kept up the search through the night until he had found it. Even so doth the Good Shepherd go in search of His lost sheep until He finds them.—*"Sunday School Times"*

404. Tact in teaching. (v. 4)

How easily they all understood Him! But how few Christian people there are who understand how to fasten the truths of God and religion to the souls of men. Truman Osborne, one

of the evangelists who went through this country some years ago, had a wonderful art in the right direction. He came to my father's house one day, and while we were all seated in the room, he said, "Mr. Talmage, are all your children Christians?" Father said, "Yes, all but De Witt." Then Truman Osborne looked down into the fireplace, and began to tell a story of a storm that came on the mountains, and all the sheep were in the fold; but there was one lamb outside that perished in the storm. Had he looked me in the eye, I should have been angered when he told that story; but he looked into the fireplace, and it was so pathetically and beautifully done, that I never found any peace until I was sure I was inside the fold, where the other sheep are.—*T. De Witt Talmage*

405. In search of stray sheep. (v. 4)

Uncle John Vassar, the celebrated colporteur of the American Tract Society, who tramped the country over from Illinois to Florida, used to describe himself as the "Shepherd's Dog." He did not claim to be a shepherd, for he put great power upon an educated and ordained ministry. He regarded himself only as a faithful dog, hunting after the stray sheep of the Master's flock, and endeavoring to bring into the fold those Christless souls who were wandering over the devil's commons. A young clergyman says that he once overtook Uncle John Vassar on the road (in Duchess county), and made some inquiry as to the residence of a friend. Uncle John gave him the information, and then promptly inquired, "My young friend, are you a Christian?" The ministerial brother told him that he hoped he was. A few words more passed, and Vassar pushed on, remarking that "he was in a hurry to look up some sheep." When the clergyman reach his friend's house, he told them that he had met a crazy man on the road, who was hunting after sheep. The family laughed heartily, and said, "Why, that was John Vassar, our Duchess county missionary, and the sheep that he is in search of are the Lord's."

406. No instinct to return. (v. 4)

The sinner is like the strayed sheep, the most stupid of animals. The cat, the dog, the horse, when lost, find their way home,—who knows how?—but the sheep has no such instinct.—*J. Wells*

407. Seeking the lost. (v. 4)

Years ago when Charley Ross was kidnapped, his broken-hearted father declared: "I will search for my lost boy while life lasts. I will go up and down the earth, and look into the face of this child and that to see if it is my lost boy."

The great Father is engaged in a similar search; nor will He rest until the lost is found.

408. The parable of the lost coin. (v. 8)

The Occident must understand the Orient in order to appreciate the beauty and the significance of this parable. That woman when she was betrothed had given to her by her lover and husband a number of coins which could be worn together about her throat, sometimes, I believe, even around the forehead where they were always in evidence. Now for an Oriental woman to lose one of these was to be guilty of the grossest carelessness on the one hand. On the other hand, she laid herself open to the suspicion even of faithlessness, so that when she met her neighbors, the other women of the village, at the well, where they drew water together, or elsewhere, the missing coin would be noted. Then would come knowing glances, arched eyebrows and whispering. Is it any wonder that she swept that house, that she was anxious to recover the coin? Is it any wonder that when she finds it she rushes out and calls these neighbors together, triumphantly exhibiting the coin, and asks them to rejoice together with her? So, likewise, said the Master, shall it be among the angels in Heaven, great joy and gladness over one sinner recovered.

409. In the heavenly empire. (v. 10)

A pious Armenian calling on Mr. Hamlyn, a missionary at Constantinople, remarked that he was astonished to see how the people were waking up to the truth; how even the most cultivated were seeking after it as for hidden treasure. "Yes," said he, "it is going forward; it will triumph; but, alas! I shall not live to see it. Alas! that I am born an age too soon." "But," said Mr. Hamlyn, "do you remember what our Saviour said, 'there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth'? You may not live to see the truth triumphant in this empire; but should you, by Divine grace, reach the kingdom of heaven, and be with the angels, your joy over your whole nation, repentant and redeemed, will be infinitely greater than it could be on earth." He seemed astonished at this thought; but after examining the various passages to which I referred him, he yielded to the evidence with the most lively expressions of delight. "O fool, and slow of heart," said he, "to read the gospel so many times without perceiving such a glorious truth! If this be so, no matter in what age a Christian is born, nor when he dies."

The Fourth Sunday after Trinity

Luke 6: 36-42

410. The origin of love and mercy. (v. 36)

As the rays come from the sun and yet are not the sun, even so our love and pity, though they are not God, but merely a poor and weak image and reflection of Him, yet from Him alone they come. If there is mercy in our hearts, it comes from the fountain of mercy. If there is the light of love in us, it is a ray from the sun of His full love.

411. Provision for mercy. (v. 36)

Abraham Lincoln's doorkeeper had standing orders from him, that no matter how great might be the throng, if either senators or representatives had to wait, or to be turned away without an audience, he must see, before the day closed, every messenger who came to him with a petition for the saving of life.

412. Falsely judged. (v. 37)

It is related of a broker in one of the Italian cities, that his strict economy brought on him the reputation of miserliness. He lived plainly and poorly, and at his death a hundred thousand men in the city were ready to curse him until his will was opened, in which he declared that early his heart was touched with the sufferings of the poor in the city for the lack of water. Springs there were none, and the public wells were bad; and he had spent his life in accumulating a fortune that should be devoted to bringing, by an aqueduct, from the neighboring mountains, streams that should pour abundantly into the baths and dwellings of the poor of the city; and he not only denied himself many of the comforts of life, but toiled by day and by night, yea, and bore obloquy, that he might bless his fellow citizens. He is dead; but those streams pour their health yet into that city.

413. Forgiveness. (v. 37)

Phocion, a prominent citizen in Greece, had been sentenced by his fellow citizens to drink the cup of poison. Before tasting it, he said to his son, "This is my last will, O Son, that thou mayest soon forget this cup of poison, and never take revenge for it."

414. Forgiveness. (v. 37)

Those who say they will forgive but can't forget an injury, simply bury the hatchet, while they leave the handle out ready for immediate use.—*Dwight L. Moody*

415. In righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor. (v. 37)

The court of Areopagus, at Athens, had great powers, and is said to have been the first court to determine questions of life and death. Its sessions were usually held at night and without any light. The reason for this singular practice is said to have been that the members might not be prejudiced in their decision by the person's appearance. Truth was all powerful, and no attempt to bias the opinion of the judges was permitted.

416. Forbearing judgment. (v. 37)

One of the most powerful scenes in Shakespeare represents King Henry, the Sixth, and his lords standing by the deathbed of Cardinal Beaufort, and listening with horror to the gasping words in which the dying man in his delirium is revealing his share in the murder of Gloucester. The gentle monarch beseeches him to make some sign that even at that supreme moment he is penitent and forgiven; but he dies in "black despair," and one of the lords exclaims, "So bad a death argues a monstrous life." In letters of gold the king's reply might well be written, "Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all!"—*Eugene Stock.*

417. Forgiveness. (v. 37)

I have read that when a seaworm perforates the shell of an oyster, the oyster immediately closes the wound with a pearl. I think it is something like that which happens when God helps me to forgive a man who has wronged me to the very heart. For thine own sake, forgive. And for thy brother's sake, forgive. "What am I brothered for?" says George Macdonald, "if not to forgive."—*George Jackson*

418. Judge not. (v. 37)

A few days before the close of Abraham Lincoln's life, somebody said to him that the defeated President of the Southern Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, ought certainly to be hanged. Lincoln answered quietly: "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

419. Giving. (v. 38)

The Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea are made of the same water. It flows down, clear and cool, from the heights of Hermon and the roots of the cedars of Lebanon. The Sea of

Galilee makes beauty of it, for the Sea of Galilee has an outlet. *It gets to give.* It gathers in its riches that it may pour them out again to fertilize the Jordan plain. But the Dead Sea with the same water makes horror. For the Dead Sea has no outlet. *It gets to keep.* That is the radical difference between selfish and unselfish men. We all do want life's enriching blessings; we ought to; they are divine benedictions. But some men get to give, and they are like Galilee; while some men get to keep and they are like the brackish water that covers Sodom and Gomorrah. "We Florentines," says one of George Eliot's characters, "live scrupulously that we may spend splendidly." —*Fosdick*

420. Give. (v. 38)

The Emperor of Brazil, Don Pedro, wanted to build a hospital in the capital of his country, Rio de Janeiro, but did not have the necessary funds. He asked the people to contribute to the hospital but they gave only a small sum of money. He then promised to make barons of those who would give a certain sum and those who would give a still larger sum which he named he promised to make counts. In a very short time he had the necessary funds. The people had not given because they were merciful, not from a good heart, having sympathy with the sick, but because they wanted to be distinguished. Therefore, Don Pedro had the following words inscribed over the entrance to the hospital: "The Vanity of Men has built this House for the Misery of Men."

421. Give and it shall be given unto you. (v. 38)

One of the leading lights of the Christian Church in America today, when a young man, took charge of a church loaded with debt. One day he preached and took a collection for foreign missions while the sheriff's flag was nailed to the front of the building and his people thought him crazy. Today that church is one of the strongest in Chicago, and a large and systematic giver to the evangelizing of the world.

422. Applied it to himself. (v. 41)

On Sunday, August 5, 1860, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote in his diary, "John Ware, of Cambridge, preached a good sermon." And then Longfellow added what many people cannot honestly say after a sermon: "I applied it to myself."

423. Cast out first the beam out of thine own eye. (v. 42)

Sir George Mellish was one of the great jurists of England. As a member of a committee appointed to draw up resolutions

of congratulation to the Queen, he discovered that his colleagues had begun one resolution with the words, "Being conscious as we are of our own defects."

"No, no," said Judge Mellish, "that will never do. We must not lie to Her Majesty. Change it to 'Being conscious as we are of one another's defects.' "—*Fosdick*

424. Beholding others' faults. (v. 42)

A wise heathen said, "Every man carries two wallets with him, hanging the one before and the other behind him. Into that before, he puts the faults of others; into that behind, he puts his own. By this means he never sees his own failings, while he has those of others always before him."

425. Faultfinders. (v. 42)

During the Civil War some gentlemen from the West obtained an interview with the President at a time when things looked dark for the national cause and gave vent in an excited manner as to the commissions and omissions of the administration.

Mr. Lincoln heard them patiently, and then replied, "Suppose, gentlemen, all the property that you were worth was in gold, and you put it into the hands of Blondin to carry across the Niagara River on a rope, would you shake the cable and keep shouting at him, 'Blondin, stand up a little straighter; go a little faster; lean a little more to the north or to the south'? No, you would hold your breath as well as your tongue, and keep your hands off until he was safely over. The government is carrying an immense weight, untold treasures are in their hands; they are doing the best they can. Don't badger them; keep silence, and we will carry you safely across."

426. Vindictiveness. (v. 42)

The business of tit for tat makes too small business for a real life to be preoccupied about. Even in legal procedure the rule of an eye for an eye issues in absurdity. In the code of Henry I, one finds this law: if a boy standing under a tree is killed by another boy who falls upon him out of the tree, then the boy who fell and did the killing must in his turn stand under a tree and let another boy fall on him until he dies. The ridiculous pettiness of such a legal principle is obvious; yet to that pass is anyone led who takes seriously the law of retaliation. To go through life slapping back each time one is slapped, is the cheapest form of wasting life.—*Fosdick*

The Fifth Sunday after Trinity

Luke 5: 1-11

427. And He entered into one of the ships which was Simon's. (v. 3)

Do you envy this fisherman who lent his boat to Jesus? He offers us the same honor; He begs us to do Him the same favor; He comes to each of us and asks us to let Him *have our daily occupation* as His preaching place, the office and workshop, the counter, the desk, the mother's work in the home, the servant's work in the house; this is the pulpit He seeks. *Will you let Him have it today?—Mark Guy Pearse*

428. And He sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. (v. 3)

Our Lord so often preached from a ship or boat that it is no wonder St. Peter, who was himself a man of the sea, should compare the Church to a ship. (I Pet. 3: 20.) It is probably for the same reason that Christians generally have given to the large central part of every church building the name *nave*, which is the Latin for ship. The Church is indeed the ship of Christ; the vessel by which it is His will that all men might be saved from the storms, and rocks, and hidden reefs of this evil world, and brought safely to the eternal shore. For nearly 1,900 years this has been her constant work. How foolish then it is for men to be trying to reach "the haven where they would be" in some way of their own devising, some raft, or plank, or life-preserver, as if Christ had never made a great ship of His own to bring them safe to land.

429. Fishing too near shore. (v. 4)

My father read the Bible through three times after he was eighty years of age, and without spectacles; not for the mere purpose of saying he had been through it so often, but for his eternal profit. John Colby, the brother-in-law of Daniel Webster, learned to read after he was eighty-four years of age, in order that he might become acquainted with the Scriptures. There is no book in the world that demands so much of our attention as the Bible. Yet nine-tenths of Christian men get no more than ankle-deep. Walk all up and down this Bible domain! Try every path. Plunge in at the prophecies, and come out at the epistles. Go with the patriarchs, until you

meet the evangelists. Rummage and ransack, as children who are not satisfied when they come to a new house, until they know what is in every room, and into what every door opens. Open every jewel-casket. Examine the sky-lights. Forever be asking questions. Put to a higher use than was intended the Oriental proverb, "Hold all the skirts of thy mantle extended when Heaven is raining gold." The sea of God's Word is not like Gennesaret, twelve miles by six, but boundless; and in any one direction you can sail on for ever. Why, then, confine yourself to a short psalm, or to a few verses of an epistle? The largest fish are not near the shore. Sail away, oh ye mariners, for eternity! Launch out into the deep.—*Dr. Talmage*

430. Fishing. (v. 4)

In her "Fishin' Jimmy," Mrs. Slosson tells of a little French-Canadian girl. Her mother was a tramp, and the girl had developed into a wild little heathen. The mother fell suddenly dead near the village one day, and the child was found clinging to her mother's body. The girl's soul was shaken by bitter sobs, and when they tried to take her away she fought like a young tigress. There was in the crowd a small boy who knew "Fishin' Jimmy." With a child's faith in his big friend, he hurried away and brought "Fishin' Jimmy" to the spot. Very tenderly he lifted the child in his arms and took her away. Nobody seems to have known anything about the taming of the little savage, but a short time afterward she and "Fishin' Jimmy" were seen on the margin of Black Brook, each with a fish-pole. He kept the child for weeks, and when she went at last to a good home, she had exchanged her wildness for a tender, affectionate nature. Then people wondered how the change was wrought. They asked Jimmy, but his explanation seemed to breathe an air of mystery. " 'Twas fishin' done it," he said, "on'y fishin'; it allers works. The Christian r'liging itself had to begin with fishin', ye know." Yes, the religion of our Master had to begin with fishing; it will continue with fishing, and it will end with fishing, for this is indeed life's divinest task.—*F. F. Shannon*

431. Fishers of men. (v. 10)

In the Crystal Palace at Munich there is a little picture called "The Red Fisherman." Satan is elegantly accoutered in red costumes, and he is fishing in a pond for men. For his hook he has a great variety of bait—gold, money, pearls, crowns, swords and wines. Apparently he has been fishing with some

success, for the bait is much after the sort that men are wont to follow. To compete with the prince of evil, Christians who would be successful "fishers of men" must use bait that will really allure them.

432. Sucking off the bait. (v. 10)

Walking to the head of the boat one evening, I saw a line over the side, and must needs hold it. You can feel by your finger, whether you have a bite or no, but I was in considerable doubt whether anything was at the other end or not. I thought they were biting, but I was not certain, so I pulled up the long line, and found that the baits were all gone; the fish had sucked them all off, and that was what they were doing when I was in doubt. If you have nothing but a sort of gathering bait, and the fish merely come and suck, but do not take the hook, you will catch no fish; you need killing bait. This often happens in the Sunday school. A pleasing speaker tells a story, and the children are all listening; he has gathered them; now comes the spiritual lesson, but hardly any of them take notice of it, they have sucked the bait from the hook, and are up and away. A minister in preaching delivers a telling illustration, all the ears in the place are open, but when he comes to the application of it the people have become listless; they like the bait very well, but not the hook; they like the adornment of the tale, but not the point of the moral. This is poor work. The plan is, if you possibly can manage it, so to get the bait on the hook that they cannot suck it off, but must take the hook and all. Do take care, dear friends, when you teach children or grown-up people, that you do not arrange the anecdotes in such a way that they can sort them out, as boys pick the plums from their cakes, or else you will amuse but not benefit.—*C. H. Spurgeon*

433. From henceforth thou shalt catch men. (v. 10)

If you look up the word "catch" in the New Testament you will find that it means "take alive," or "save alive." That is what Jesus is doing, and that is what His true followers are doing, too, by His help.

434. Fishers of men. (v. 10)

I watched an old man trout-fishing the other day, pulling them out one after another briskly. "You manage it cleverly, old friend," I said; "I have passed a good many below who don't seem to be doing anything." The old man lifted himself up

and stuck his rod in the ground. "Well, you see, Sir, there be three rules for trout-fishing, and 'tis no good trying if you don't mind them. The first is, Keep *yourself* out of sight; and the second is, Keep yourself farther out of sight; and the third is, Keep yourself farther still out of sight. Then you'll do it." "Good for catching men, too," thought I.—*Mark Guy Pearse*

435. The noblest calling. (v. 10)

An eminent New England divine, in his last sickness, was asked by a friend, "What seems to you now the greatest thing?" "Not theology," said this prince of theologians; "not controversy," again replied this chief of debaters; "but," gathering up his last breath to speak the words, while his spirit hovered at the gate of heaven, "the greatest thing in the world is to save a soul." He spoke of what he knew, for he had felt the joy of delivering many; and could the witness of all saints, from Peter down to the last ascended, be taken, would it not be the same, "the greatest thing on earth is to save a soul"?—*J. B. Clark*

436. Henceforth thou shalt catch men. (v. 10)

A legend tells us that in Vienna there was once an unusual statue of Christ, which always appeared an inch taller than the person who stood before it. If a giant like Goliath came and stood before it, the statue grew and became an inch higher than he so that he must humbly look up to it. But if a dwarf like Zaccheus stood before it, the statue shrunk, so that also little people without effort could look up into His face.

So it is with work for Christ. The power of Goliath and the greatest riches here find a field, which is always greater than the power and the means at hand. But the strength of Zaccheus and the poor widow's mite are also welcome and can be used, so that there is always an opportunity for the one who wants to work for Christ. But there is always an inch lacking. We do not measure up fully. Every one of us must say: "I am still doing too little."

437. Leaving all to follow Christ. (v. 11)

The secretary of the Brighton Town Mission narrates the following: "Miss B. was in the theatrical profession, earning as much at times as 21 pounds a week. Through the agencies at work in connection with our hall, she was led to choose the one thing needful. But now came the struggle between duty to Christ and duty to her parents. As she expressed it, 'She could not have Christ and go on with her work; therefore, as

she felt, she would rather die than dishonor Him,' although only seventeen, she made the happy choice. Every means was taken to win her back; her Bible was burned, her clothes taken from her, she was locked up in her room, she was sent from home; but flattery and persecution were alike in vain, she realized in its fulness the promise, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' She still holds on her way rejoicing."

438. They forsook all and followed Him. (v. 11)

It is said of Julius Cæsar, the great Roman warrior, that he never used the word of command, *Ite,* "Forward," but always *Venite,* "Follow me." In the same manner our beloved Saviour speaks. He goes before and says: "Come and follow me."

The Sixth Sunday after Trinity

Matthew 5: 20-26

439. A man should not be content with morality when spirituality is possible. (v. 20)

A man should not live in a hovel when he can live in a house. A man is not content to live in a house when he can live in a mansion. And no man, I think, would live in a mansion when he could live in a palace. So no man is living rightly or honorably who demands of himself no more than morality requires.—*Beecher*

440. Except your righteousness exceed. (v. 20)

A shipmaster wants to anchor. He throws out his anchor, and puts out his cable, and comes within about twenty feet of the bottom. It is not any longer. What is it good for? It is good as far as it goes; but it does not go far enough to touch the bottom, and therefore it is not good for anything.—*Beecher*

441. Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees. (v. 20)

Examining the sketch of a pupil in a studio one day, it is said that Michael Angelo silently wrote upon the canvas the single word, *Amplior,* "larger." So must we write over all the sketches and systems and philosophies of the past, *Amplior,*— as Christ wrote over the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees not "less" but "more."

442. Anger. (v. 22)

Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War during President Lincoln's administration, had become greatly provoked at an officer in the army who had misunderstood Stanton's order. "I have a great mind," he said to Lincoln, "to write the fellow my opinion of him, and not mince my words." "All right," Lincoln replied, "do so; write just as you feel about the case; make your words as cutting as you can; do not spare him." Stanton did not wait for a second urging from the President. In a short while he came to read to the President the sharp reprimand which he intended to administer to the officer. "Well done!" said Lincoln; "there is no room for improvement in that." "By whom could I send the letter?" asked Stanton.

"Send it—did you say?" Lincoln asked in turn. "Why, that is not necessary. The letter has served its purpose: it has rid you of your anger. Now tear it up. That's what I do. Such letters cannot be sent."

443. Whosoever shall say "Raca." (v. 22)

There is an old story told of a woman who was cursed with a bitter tongue. She came to her father confessor one day and confessed this besetting sin, and asked him to show her some way by which she might conquer it. "Go home to your farm, my good woman," said the holy man, "and kill your fattest fowl, and then come back here, plucking it by the way, and give me the hen as a penance for your sin." The woman did so. She brought the fowl back, plucking it by the way. "Now," he said, "bring this fowl to the woman you have injured as a reparation for your words, and *then go and gather these feathers you have plucked by the way, and bring them back to me.*" The woman brought the bird to the woman she had injured, and they were made friends from that hour; but when she went back to gather up the feathers that had been plucked, she could only find one or two, for the wind had blown the rest all away. "These," she said, "these, Father, are all I could find, search as I would. The wind has blown all the rest away." "Yes," said her confessor, "and when you are next about to speak angry or malicious words, remember that they are like these feathers. *They are easy to pluck but very difficult to gather back again.*" The woman learned her difficult lesson. From that day "the law of kindness was on her lips."—*Mackay*

444. Restraint of hasty temper possible. (v. 22)

La Fontaine, chaplain of the Prussian army, once preached an earnest sermon on the sin and folly of yielding to a hasty temper. The next day a major of the regiment accosted him in no very good humor, saying: "Well, sir! I think you made use of the prerogative of your office to annoy me with some very sharp hits yesterday." "I certainly thought of you while I was preparing the sermon," the chaplain answered, "but I had no intention of being personal or sharp." "Well, it is of no use," said the major, "I have a hasty temper, and I cannot help it. I cannot control it; the thing is impossible." The following Sunday La Fontaine preached on self-deception, and the vain excuses which men are accustomed to make. "Why," said he, "a man will declare it is impossible to control his temper, when he very well knows that were the same provocation to

happen in the presence of his sovereign, he not only *could,* but *would* control himself entirely. And yet he dares to say that the continual presence of the King of kings imposes upon him neither restraint nor fear." The next day the preacher met the officer again, who said, humbly, "You were right yesterday, chaplain. Hereafter, whenever you see me in the danger of falling, remind me of the King."

445. If thou bring thy gift to the altar. (v. 23)

"My revered grandfather (a Jew)," related Dr. Capadose, "had a brother of whom he was very fond. One day they became angry over a dispute and both went home unreconciled. When evening approached my grandmother began preparations for the Sabbath. "Come, dear Joseph," she said, "night is coming on, light the Sabbath lamps." But he only paced forth and back, anxious and depressed. His good wife began again: "See, the stars are already lighted on the firmament of the Lord, and our Sabbath lamps are not burning!" Then my grandfather took his hat and hurried from the house. In a very few minutes he returned with tears of joy in his eyes. "Now I am ready, dear Rebecca," he called. He said his prayer and lighted the Sabbath lamps with joy. Then he told his wife what had happened in the morning between him and his brother and added: "I could not pray and light the lamps before I had become reconciled to my brother Isaac." "But how could you arrange it so quickly?" "Oh," he answered, "Isaac was just as worried as I was. He could not begin the Sabbath without being reconciled to me. So we met on the street. He was coming to me and I was going to him and we fell in each other's arms and cried."

446. Leave there thy gift before the altar. (v. 24)

A missionary in New Zealand was distributing the Lord's Supper to his people. Suddenly a Maori who was kneeling at the altar stood up and went back to his seat. After a few minutes he came back again, knelt, and received the sacrament. Later he told the missionary the following: "Before I became a Christian, my father was murdered, and that Sunday I suddenly saw his murderer kneeling not far from me. Thoughts of revenge suddenly came to me, but now I am a Christian. The murderer must also have become a Christian. So I went away until I could feel in my heart that I had forgiven him."

447. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him. (v. 25)

I remember very well the story of a man who once had grieved his wife. I do not remember what it was about, if it was an offending word or some deed or other. The man was leaving to go to his work. He was to cut down trees and just as he was ready to leave the house he turned to his wife and said: "Wife, I am sorry. Let us be friends. Give me a kiss." She turned away angrily and declined his request. The entire day she regretted her action for she really loved him and was sorry that she had been sulky and had let him go without the kiss of love. He never came back alive. Toward evening four men carried him into the house a corpse. She would then gladly have given a thousand worlds if she had not dismissed him in that manner.

448. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him. (v. 25)

A deacon spoke in an unfriendly manner to his pastor during a meeting. That night he had a dream. He dreamed that the pastor died and went to heaven; and he also died and came to the gate of heaven. Then his pastor came, reached out his hand toward him and said: "Come in, John, there is no strife here. How splendid that you are here." The deacon hurried to his pastor to ask his forgiveness, but found that the pastor actually had departed this life. This was such a hard blow that he also died two weeks later.

449. Anger

Anger is like a drop of acid on silver. Wipe it off immediately and no harm may be done. Let it remain over-night and the vessel is marred.

The Seventh Sunday after Trinity

Mark 8: 1-9

450. He had compassion on the multitude. (v. 2)

Emperor Frederick III once held a convocation at Cologne. Such great multitudes came that the Emperor greatly feared the supply of food would give out. He commanded the bread be apportioned and distributed and it appeared that there scarcely was a penny's worth of bread for every four or five persons. When he later inquired whether anyone had suffered from hunger, the reply was that all had been satisfied and there was a goodly supply left. God can yet today perform wonders as He did hundreds of years ago.

451. He gave thanks. (v. 6)

King Alfonso X, of Spain, who was called "the Wise," learned that his pages continually ate without thanking God for the food. One day he invited them all to his table. A splendid dinner was prepared for them. When all was ready he gave a sign to begin eating. They all enjoyed the repast but not one of them had thought to thank God for the food. Suddenly the door opened. A ragged beggar came and without ado sat down at the king's table and began to eat and drink. Great indignation was written on all the faces. When the beggar had satisfied his hunger he arose and went out without a word of thanks. "What a vulgar man," cried all the pages. The king arose slowly and said with great earnestness: "Boys, you are every one of you more audacious and insolent than the beggar. Day by day you sit at a rich table which your heavenly Father prepares for you but you have no word of thanks to Him." The pages understood the king's reprimand.

452. The feast of good things. (v. 6)

A friend of mine gave me this story. He said that a few years ago a Georgian decided to make a trip by way of steamer from Savannah to Boston. He knew nothing about steamship travel. So the day before he was to start he got him a good size shoe box and filled it full of cheese and crackers, enough to last him to Boston. With his box of cheese and crackers he got aboard. When everybody else went to supper he got out his shoe box and went on deck and helped himself. And this he did every meal. Finally his appetite became more of a ques-

tion. Hence the captain was approached by him one day as he was going to dinner and asked, "Captain, what would you charge, please, sir, to let me go down there and get one square meal?" "Why, my fellow," said the jolly captain, "have you had nothing to eat since you left Savannah?" "Yes," said he, "a bit of cheese and crackers; but I'll vow, captain, if I don't get something else I'll eat the shoe box." "Why," said the captain, "your ticket calls for meals and passage. Go down and help yourself." How much like the sinner! He carries his shoe box around with him and lives on cheese and crackers, when he might be eating at the King's table.—*Len G. Broughton*

453. And he took the seven loaves and gave thanks. (v. 6)

An English warship came to a place in the Hawaiian Islands where missionaries had worked. The captain of the ship arranged a banquet for the royal family and some of the chieftains. The table was loaded with all sorts of delicacies, and the company was seated, but the islanders would not begin to eat. The captain could not understand it and thought that the guests for some reason feared to help themselves. He told them that he was assured the food would be to their taste, but it did not help. Finally, a steward guessed the reason for their hesitation and whispered to the captain: "They are waiting for someone to pray." "Well, then pray," was the answer. When the steward had said grace they set to with a will, and so taught nominal Christians how to eat to the glory of God.

454. Providential food. (v. 6)

Bishop Bascom was preaching, on one occasion, in a cabin which was at once church and dwelling. In the very midst of the sermon, his host, who sat near the door, suddenly rose from his seat, snatched the gun from its wooden brackets upon which it lay against the joist, went hastily out, fired it off, and, returning, put the gun in its place, and quietly seated himself to hear the remainder of the sermon. After the service was ended, Bascom inquired of the man the meaning of this strange conduct. "Sir," said he, "we are entirely out of meat; and I was perplexed to know what we should give you for dinner, and it was preventing me from enjoying the sermon, when God sent a flock of wild turkeys this way. I happened to see them, took my gun, and killed two at a shot. My mind felt easy; and I enjoyed the remainder of the sermon with perfect satisfaction."

455. He gave thanks. (v. 6)

In the papers a little time ago, our attention was drawn to a remarkably interesting incident in the life of Sven Hedin. While exploring the hitherto unknown portions of Central Asia, he was for days entirely deprived of water. He suffered excruciating tortures, because of his burning thirst. At last, unexpectedly, he came upon a pool of clear water. Now, picture to your mind this scientific man, burning up with thirst, and right in front of him this great pool of clear, cool, sparkling water. What shall he do? He reports the case himself. These are his words: "First of all I thanked God. Next, I felt my pulse." Brave fellow! Reverent Christian! Then he says, "I drank." God bless him, he had a right to drink then. We have here, in the first place, a striking illustration of the religious habit: he thanked God before he drank the water. We have, in the second place, an equally striking and interesting illustration of the scientific habit: he felt his pulse. I wish that we all might follow his example in thanking God, in connection with our eating and drinking. We are apt to eat and drink as if we were animals, as if we were dogs, or horses, or hogs, forgetting God, the Giver of every good and perfect gift. The picture of this explorer thanking God and feeling his pulse, I shall never get out of my mind so long as I live. I shall always be influenced by his religious habit and by his scientific habit; thanking God, and feeling his own pulse before he satisfied his burning thirst.—*MacArthur*

456. Miraculous food. (v. 6)

The following legend is told of St. Anthony and St. Paul the hermits. Anthony found the hermit Paul dwelling in a cave amid savage rocks, with a palm tree and a fountain near. The cave had been his home for ninety years. These two venerable men, after gazing for a while upon each other, embraced with tears of joy, and sat down by the fountain; and Paul asked of Anthony concerning the world, and if there yet existed idolaters, and many other things; and they held long communion together. While they talked, forgetting the flight of time and the wants of nature, there came a raven, which alighted on the tree, and then, after a little space, flew away, and returned, carrying in his beak a small loaf, and let it fall between them; then Paul, lifting up his eyes, blessed the goodness of God and said, "For sixty years, every day hath this raven brought me half a loaf; but because thou art come, my brother, lo! the portion is doubled; and we are fed as Elijah was fed in the wilderness." Then there arose between these two holy men

a contention, out of their great modesty and humility, which of the two should break the bread: at last, they both took hold of the loaf, and broke it between them. Then they ate, and drank of the water of the fountain, and returned thanks.—*Mrs. Jameson*

457. Give ye them to eat. (Matt. 14: 16)

When King Alfred after the disastrous battle with the Danes arrived at Athelney, a beggar came to him and asked him for an alms. The queen said that they had only one little loaf of bread for themselves and their friends. Some had just gone out to seek for food but the outcome of their quest was uncertain. The king, however, said to his wife: "Give the poor man half of the loaf. He who satisfied five thousand men with five loaves, can also satisfy us with half of a loaf."

458. They took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets. (v. 8)

A young soldier in the Civil War threw away a piece of bread and a comrade rebuked him mildly, saying: "John, you shouldn't do that. Have you already forgotten Fair Oaks?" Remembering the three days when they had no bread to eat the young soldier stooped, picked up the bread and placed it in his knapsack.

The Eighth Sunday after Trinity

Matthew 7: 15-23

459. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing. (v. 15)

A Catholic church in Brooklyn was robbed in full view of the street in a peculiar way. The robbers entered the rear of the church, and clothing themselves in white surplices, boldly lighted all the jets in the sacristy and commenced their work. People saw them in the church, but supposed that they were priests performing some ceremony. It is a testimony to the worth of Christianity that the robes of a Christian profession are sometimes worn by wolves who seek thereby only to cover up their ravening. Men do not counterfeit a coin unless it is valuable.

460. Disguised danger. (v. 15)

D. W. Whittle tells of a soldier who was posted in a forest to watch the approach of Indians. It was a position of peculiar danger, three different men having been surprised and killed at this post without having had time to fire a shot. The soldier was left with strict orders to observe the utmost vigilance. In a short time an object moving among the trees at some distance caught his eye. He watched it, with gun ready; as it came a little nearer, he saw it to be a wild hog. Another came in sight. He satisfied himself it was a wild hog, rooting under the leaves. Presently, in another direction, the leaves were rustled and a third wild hog appeared. Being now used to these creatures, he paid but little attention. The movements of the last animal, however, soon engaged the man's thoughts. He observed a slight awkwardness in its movements, and thought possibly an Indian might be approaching, covered in a hog's skin. If it was an Indian the safest thing was to shoot. If it was not an Indian, and he should shoot, he would run no risk. He raised his rifle and fired. With a bound and a yell, an Indian leapt to his feet and fell back dead. The man had saved his life, and prevented the surprise of the garrison by his watchfulness.

461. Thistle seed. (v. 16)

There is a schoolboy, yawning over his lesson. He sits with his books before him, but he is not working. If we ask him

why, he says, "Oh, I hate Latin!" "Well, perhaps you like arithmetic better?" "Oh no, I hate doing sums." "Well, do you like geography?" "Oh no, I hate geography worst of all." The real truth is, he hates work. He is *sowing thistles;* and by and by, when his school days are over, the prickles will sting him, and the empty, useless seed be a plague in his neighbors' fields.—*E. R. Conder*

462. By their fruits ye shall know them. (v. 16)

Dora Greenwell says: "The tree is known by its fruits; most truly so; but it depends for the maintenance of those fruits, yea, even for its own existence, upon its root in the soil beneath. The Christian life is judged (and this with the strictest propriety) by that part of it which is seen, but it depends upon the part of it which is unseen for the hold it takes and keeps upon God."

463. By their fruits ye shall know them. (v. 16)

It is related of the famous artist, Gustav Dore, that when he was traveling from one country to another in Europe he lost his passport. He was very anxious to cross the border that day. So he said to the police: "I am very sorry, but I have lost my passport. I hope you will let me pass without it."

"Oh," was the reply, "you cannot deceive us. Many persons try to pass claiming to be some distinguished character." But Dore entreated and insisted and so an officer finally said: "Well, we will very soon see if you are Dore or not. Take this pencil and paper and sketch that group of peasants standing there." It took but a few moments for the great artist to make the picture, and in such a masterly manner was it done that the officer was at once convinced.

So today when men profess to be Christians the world says: "Let us see whether you are or not; what do ye more than others?" "By their fruits ye shall know them."

464. By their fruits ye shall know them. (v. 16)

In Palestine there is a counterfeit olive tree, called the wild olive, or *oleaster.* It is in every way like the genuine olive, with one exception: it bears no fruit.

Many professed Christians in Christ's spiritual orchard are like the oleaster. They absorb a vast deal of sunlight and soil, but they yield no real fruit.

465. By their fruits ye shall know them. (v. 16)

The wife of Sir Bartle Frere went to meet her husband at the railway station, taking with her a servant who had never

seen his master. "You must go and look for Sir Bartle," she ordered. "But," answered the nonplussed servant, "how shall I know him?" "Oh," said the lady, "look for a tall gentleman helping somebody." The description was sufficient. He found Sir Bartle Frere helping an old lady out of a railway carriage, and knew him at once.

466. The tree known by its fruits. (v. 17)

A short time ago a Salvation Army captain was preaching in Hyde Park, London, when a man in the crowd interrupted him. "We haven't anything agin' Jesus of Nazareth," said the interrupter, "but we have something agin' you Christians, because you ain't up to sample."

467. Religion must be dominant. (v. 21)

Quoting from an article he had admired in the *Times Literary Supplement*, Dr. Jowett recently took exception to the sentence, "Religion must join itself in equal alliance with patriotism, art, and literature, as paganism did."

"Religion won't do it. It is just as though these dumb, mute pipes behind me were to call to the genial airs now moving over St. James' Park, 'Would you like to join us on equal terms, to become one of us?' 'One of you?' replied the air, 'I am the one *in* you. Not in fellowship, but in possession, diffusion, pervasion. Not one by your side, but one within you all!' The wandering air will only consent to come into the organ pipe as king."

Vital religion will not enter into an equal alliance with anything. It must be king of everything.

468. Christian profession easy. (v. 21)

It is easy enough to assume the character and manner of a Christian, but to live the Christian life is not so easy. A man can make a sham diamond in a very short time, but the real gem must lie for ages in the earth before it can sparkle with perfect purity. We have far too many of these quickly made Christians amongst us, who have never brought forth fruits meet for repentance, nor gone through the fire of trial, and sorrow, and self-sacrifice. Do not trust to feelings, or words, in yourselves or others, look at your life; a real and a false diamond are very much alike, and yet there is all the difference in the world in their value.—*Wilmot Buxton*

469. Sincerity in our devotions and worship. (v. 21)

John Tauler, a mystic of the fourteenth century, wrote: "Verily, verily, ye err, ye people of Cologne, if ye believe that your glorious cathedral, your golden tower, and your ceaseless music of bells can be of use to you for holiness. The churches make no one holy; but pious, God-fearing people hallow the churches."

470. Christian evidence. (v. 21)

Mr. A. J. Cassatt, the late president of the Pennsylvania Railway, was once making a quiet tour over one of the branches of the system, and wandered into an out-of-the-way switch-yard, where something one of the yardmen was doing did not meet with his approbation. He made some suggestion to the man, who asked: "Who are you that's trying to teach me my business?" "I am an officer of the road," replied Mr. Cassatt. "Let's see your switch-key, then," said the man suspiciously. Mr. Cassatt pulled from his hip pocket his key-ring, to which was attached the switch-key, which no railroad man in service is ever without. It was sufficient proof for the switchman, who then did as he was told.

If we are going to have any real leadership in dealing with the souls of men they must see in our conversation, in the tone of our character, in the spirit of our life, that we possess the "switch-key," the evident presence of Christ.

471. Sincerity in the work of life. (v. 21)

Gipsy Smith, in addressing the students in Moody's Institute, said: "If you ask me the keynote of my success, I would say to you simply and honestly, an honest attempt to be loyal to Jesus Christ. That is all; that is my great asset. God wants the heart right, transparent as a sunbeam and beautiful as a spring morning."

472. Deeds not appearances. (v. 21)

The Orientals have a proverb which says: "Provided that beneficence have long fingers and rapid steps, what does it matter if its wry faces displease thee? Don't look at its face." —*"Revue des Deux Mondes"*

The Ninth Sunday after Trinity

Luke 16: 1-9

473. Example of honesty. (v. 1-9)

During the war in Germany, the captain of a troop of horse found a poor man, and desired him to show them a good barley field, where the horses could be fed. The poor man promised to do so, and accordingly led them some way, till at length he brought them to what they were seeking. "These will do very well," said the captain. "Halt." "Come a little farther," said the poor man, "and I will show you one that will do better." Accordingly he led the troops farther on; and sure enough, they came to another barley field. "After all," said the captain, "this is not so good a field as that which you led us past." "No," said the poor man, "but this is *mine.*"—*Dr. Neale*

474. Dead while he lives. (v. 1-9)

It was the custom among the Scythians, when the head of a household died, to dress his body in the finest clothes, set him in his chariot, and carry him about to the houses of his friends. There they placed the man at the table, and feasted before him as he sat in his richest dress, apparently alive, but really dead. So is it with those who live only for the world. They have a name that they live, but they are dead.

475. He shall carry nothing away with him. (v. 1-9)

It is said that when Alexander the Great was dying he gave orders that when his body was prepared for the grave his hands should not be wrapped, as was usual, in the cere-cloths, but should be left outside the bier. He said he wanted people to see that they were empty, that he, born to one empire, the conqueror of another, and the possessor of the riches of both, yet now could carry not even the smallest thing away with him when he was dead.

476. Worldliness fatal. (v. 1-9)

In Brazil there grows a common plant which forest dwellers call the "matador," or "murderer." Its slender stem creeps at first along the ground; but no sooner does it meet a vigorous tree, than, with clinging grasp, it cleaves to it, and climbs it, and as it climbs, keeps, at short intervals, sending out arm-like tendrils that embrace that tree. As the murderer ascends,

these ligatures grow larger, and clasp tighter. Up, up, it climbs a hundred feet, nay, two hundred feet if need be until the last loftiest spire is gained and fettered. Then, as if in triumph, the parasite shoots a huge, flowery head above the strangled summit, and thence from the dead tree's crown, scatters its seed to do again the work of death. Even thus worldliness has strangled more people than ever persecution killed.

477. Our responsibility to God. (v. 1)

The question was once asked Daniel Webster, what was the greatest thought that could occupy the human mind. After spending a moment in silent meditation he replied: "Unquestionably it is the soul's personal responsibility to God."

478. The same was accused unto him. (v 1)

A young woman was showing her friends a very artistic doily, which she had made and of which she was very proud. The doily was greatly admired and the young woman was given much credit for her work. "You must have spent a long time on this," they said. "Yes, indeed," was her triumphant answer. "I have written down the length of time it has taken me and do you know, added together it makes four weeks, if I count eight hours to the day." Later on, the conversation brought out the sad fact that this young woman had given up a Sunday school class, because it had been impossible for her to "find time for preparation."

479. Give an account of thy stewardship. (v. 2)

An eastern allegory runs thus: A merchant going abroad for a time, gave respectively to two of his friends two sacks of wheat each, to take care of until his return. Years passed: he came back, and applied for them again. The first took him into his storehouse, and showed him them; but they were mildewed and worthless. The other led him out into the open country, and pointed out field after field of waving corn, the produce of the two sacks given him. Said the merchant: "You have been a faithful friend. Give me two sacks of that wheat: the rest shall be yours."

480. A generous friend. (v. 6)

A City Mission has a true friend, who, each time she takes a journey sends a generous gift, always including a sum for an invalid missionary. Once when she found it necessary to cancel an intended journey, she sent the entire sum which the journey would have cost, several thousands.

481. Charity the road to wealth. (v. 6)

You want to double your riches, and without gambling or stock-jobbing. Share it. Whether it be material or intellectual, its rapid increase will amaze you. What would the sun have been, had he folded himself up in darkness? Surely he would have gone out. So would Socrates. This road to wealth seems to have been discovered some three thousand years ago; at least, it was known to Hesiod, and has been recommended by him in the one precious line he has left us. But even he complains of the fools who did not know that half is more than the whole. And ever since, though mankind have always been in full chase after riches, though they have not feared to follow Columbus and Gama in chase of it, though they have waded through blood, and crept through falsehood, and trampled on their own hearts, and been ready to ride on a broomstick, in chase of it, very few have ever taken the road, albeit the easiest, the shortest, and the surest.—*J. C. Hare*

482. Wealth changed into the coin of heaven. (v. 7)

Every rich man who is growing selfish and using all his money for earthly uses only should study this parable. It would surely cure him. Money may be made a grand thing both now and hereafter; for by liberality you can change it into the current coin of heaven. You are like an orphan maid I read of, whose kind master allowed her to give away the fruit of his garden, that she might raise up friends for herself among the neighbors. Wealth thus used is worthy of its name, which is just *weal* writ large.—*J. Wells*

483. Sagacity commended. (v. 8)

It is merely the wisdom, the practical sagacity, the *savoir faire* of the steward that is commended to our attention and imitation. A bad thing may be well done. The most admirable qualities, industry, perseverance, bravery, quickness, may serve to accomplish a wicked as well as a righteous purpose. Few can withhold a tribute of applause from the forger who successfully copies a very difficult banknote, or elaborates a professedly mediæval document so as to deceive even the experts. No one commends the morality of David when he played the madman at Gath, and scribbled on the gate; but who has not smiled at his skill in meeting the occasion, in overreaching all his enemies, and making them serve him by the simple device of hiding the brightest intellect of the age under the vacant, silly stare of the idiot? The wisdom of the unjust steward,

which we are invited to admire, appeared mainly in his businesslike apprehension of the actual situation in which he was placed, and his sagacity and promptitude in making the most of it. He looked the facts in the face. He did not buoy himself up with delusive hopes. He did not waste his brief opportunity in idle expectations. He manfully faced the inevitable, and this was his salvation. The ability to do so is a great part of what is known as a strong character.—*Marcus Dods*

484. A wise steward. (v. 8)

In an old churchyard this epitaph is found:

> In quiet let him repose
> Beneath this solemn stone.
> He living, best was loved by those
> To whom he best was known.

The tombstone on which it is carved is poor and neglected. Half covered by the long grass, it speaks of no greatness or glory. The man whom it commemorates was evidently a man of no great talents. Yet to my mind no worthier inscription can be written over any man's life. "He living, best was loved by those to whom he best was known." The world may know nothing of you. No thrill may pass through men's hearts when your death notice appears in the public records. Yet those who did know you; best of all, those who knew you best, those will love you. And when from the court of the world's judgments, with its often strange appreciations your life and work pass into the presence of Him whose eye never makes a mistake, whose judgment never errs, then one voice will say: "Well done, good and faithful servant! Thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

485. A profitable investment. (v. 9)

The old Jewish writers tell us of a certain avaricious Rabbi who was very anxious to invest his wealth to the best advantage. A friend undertook to do this for him. One day the Rabbi asked the name of the investment from which he was assured he would receive the highest interest. His friend answered, "I have given all your money to the poor." You know, that if you were going to take a journey into some foreign country, you would change your English money for the currency of the place to which you were bound. You would con-

vert your sovereigns, and banknotes, and shillings, into dollars, or roubles, or francs, or what not. Well, remember that we all have to take a journey into a land beyond the grave, where our money, and our pride, and our intellect, and our strength, and our success will not avail us; these will not be the currency of the country. Let us change our currency now, and get such property as faith, love, purity, gentleness, meekness, truth; these alone will pass current in the better country. Consecrate your wealth, or your work, or your influence, or whatever you have to God.—*H. J. Wilmot Buxton*

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity

Luke 19: 41-48

486. Jesus wept. (v. 41)

At the grave of Lazarus Jesus wept; the Greek word there used is *edakrusen;* there He shed silent tears. But now His voice breaks. The Greek word here employed is *eklausen.* Our Lord now burst out in sorrow, no longer able to control His emotions. A blessed Christ, a King of Glory; how tender was Thy heart toward Thy chosen people who despised and rejected Thee.

487. Unrequited love. (v. 41)

What a wound in the heart of Jesus, occasioned by unrequited love. As Browning has put it, the people of Jerusalem "trod upon a heart." I remember once officiating at the funeral of a woman whom I verily believe died of a broken heart. She had two sons. One a fine, noble boy, died early of consumption in a foreign land. That was a sore wound in that mother's heart; but the other still was left. Alas! he did not turn out well. He was careless, unloving and finally left her. Then she turned her face to the wall and died. The battle was too sore. The deadly wound would not heal. As I looked at the son at that funeral, I saw he was dumb with grief; and well might he be so. Such things are happening all around us.

488. He beheld the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known. (v. 41)

What an application there is in this picture for the America of today! If Christ were to stand upon the brow of Bear Mountain or upon the hillside of Atlantic Highlands, and look toward New York City! its sky-line, its towering churches, its mammoth commerce, its thriving peoples, its network of bridges, railways, ferries and ocean liners! The hum of its machinery, the smoke of its fires, the crack of its electricity, the din of Wall Street and the glare of Broadway, the cry of the poor of the East Side and the silken rustle of Fifth Avenue! Is not our colossal wealth, our great resources, our abundant prosperity but a God-given challenge? Are these not tokens of tremendous destiny, of Divine responsibility? Are these talents then to be wrapped up in the napkin of our selfish desires

and buried in the gratification of our appetites? As the Christ stands this morning overlooking our city, looking into our individual hearts, are there tears in His eyes? Do our lives cause His heartache? Is there a shudder of disappointment on His limbs or a regret upon His lips? Did He die in vain? "Oh, you people of America, you people of New York, you people of Brooklyn, you Christian people, if thou hadst known. . . . . if thou hadst known. . . . ."—*F. Jefferson Neal*

489. The tears of love. (v. 41)

I heard the other day of a bad boy whom his father had often rebuked and chastened, but the lad grew worse. One day he had been stealing, and his father felt deeply humiliated. He talked to the boy, but his warning made no impression; and when he saw his child so callous the good man sat down in his chair and burst out crying, as if his heart would break. The boy stood very indifferent for a time, but at last as he saw the tears falling on the floor, and heard his father sobbing, he cried, "Father, don't; father, don't do that; what do you cry for, father?" "Ah! my boy," he said, "I cannot help thinking what will become of you, growing up as you are. You will be a lost man, and the thought of it breaks my heart." "Oh, father!" he said, "pray don't cry. I will be better. Only don't cry, and I will not vex you again." Under God that was the means of breaking down the boy's love of evil, and I hope it led to his salvation. Just that is Christ to you. He cannot bear to see you die, and He weeps over you, saying, "How often would I have blessed you, and you would not!" Oh, by the tears of Jesus, wept over you in effect when He wept over Jerusalem, turn to Him.—*C. H. Spurgeon*

490. God's threatenings and promises. (v. 43, 47)

Two rabbis were looking over the ruins of Jerusalem. One of them wept bitterly over the desolations of Zion and the sad fortunes which had befallen the city of his fathers. The other laughed when he viewed the same things. "Why do you laugh?" "Because by this vast desolation, which assured us that God is true to His threatenings, we know that the same God will be true also to His promises, and will restore Zion to her beauty and glory."—*Peloubet*

491. Thou knowest not the time of thy visitation. (v. 44)

No judgment of God upon Sodom or Jerusalem, Paris or Peking is an arbitrary and wanton judgment. Every evil

man, city or empire slowly prepares the explosives that by natural processes bring about their own retribution.

To the outer eye, when the giant tree goes down in the forest, it goes down suddenly and unexpectedly, but to the close observer, the preparation for the fall covered months and years. Slowly the worm cuts its way to the heart of the tree; slowly the rain swells the tiny hole, the frost loosens, the heat enlarges the aperture; slowly the gases and acids begin to cut the fibre; little by little the decay goes toward the heart. Outwardly the bark is sound. To the boy's eyes, the great tree seems easily the king of the forest, and yet the heart is hollow, and the tree is a mere shell. One day there is the sound of the winds going in the tree tops, and suddenly, the huge tree comes crashing down, and lo, it had a rotten heart.

Thus the day came when the armies of Titus were encamped round about Jerusalem. The walls fell, the temple doors gave way, and not one stone was left upon another.

492. Our day of grace. (v. 44)

As God dealt with the city of Jerusalem, so He deals with us as individuals. God has given us a day of grace, has given a time wherein to repent of sin and prepare for another world. This day and this period is circumscribed. It is, as it were, a circle described around us; and when we pass over that boundary, then the day of grace is past and gone; the Spirit has ceased to strive, and our doom is fixed for ever. I will illustrate this from history. One of the kings of Syria made war upon Egypt, which was at that time an ally of the Roman republic. When the news reached the Roman senate, they despatched into Egypt two senators; one of them was a dear friend of the king. They went direct to the camp of the Syrian monarch, who came forth to meet them; but the senator, refusing to recognize him as his friend, at once put him upon his choice: to raise the siege and withdraw his army out of Egypt, or to forfeit his friendly relation with Rome, who would at once send forth her legions and compel him. To this he endeavored to give an equivocal answer: he would consider over it, or he would consider of it at another time. But this was not enough for the Romans; the senator, therefore, with the wand he had in his hand, drew a circle around him on the sand where they stood, and demanded his answer and decision ere he left it. He had to make his choice: he decided to withdraw his army, and then the senator extended his hand and recognized his friend. In a similar way God has drawn a circle around us, and demands us to make a choice. That circle is our day of grace. May we, then, today, while it is called today,

harden not our hearts, lest God should swear in His wrath we shall not enter into His rest!—*A. Jones*

493. Too late. (v. 44)

God forbid that any of you should at the last have the dismay of the Scotchwoman of whom I was reading. One night she could not sleep because of her soul's wandering from Christ. She got up and wrote in her diary: "One year from now I will attend to the matters of my soul." She retired, but could not sleep. So she arose again, and wrote a better promise in her diary: "One month from now I will attend to the matters of my soul." She retired again, but found no sleep, and arose again and wrote: "Next week I will attend to the matters of my soul." Then she slept soundly. The next day she went into scenes of gaiety. The following day she was sick, and the middle of next week she died. Delirium lifted from her mind just long enough for her to say: "I am a week too late. I am lost!" Oh, to be a year too late, or a month too late, or a week too late, or a day too late, or a minute too late, or a second too late, is to be for ever too late. May God Almighty, by His grace, keep us from the wild, awful, crushing catastrophe of a ruined soul.—*Dr. Talmage*

The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

Luke 18: 9-14

494. Outward religion. (v. 9)

Outward religion cannot take the place of the inner cleansing of the heart by the blood of Christ. The story is told of a Nova Scotia sailor who has the Lord's Prayer tattooed on his back. He says that his dying mother asked him never to part with the back cover of a family Bible, on which the Lord's Prayer was printed in letters of gold. For many years he carried this cover on all his cruises; but one day, having a tussle with a sailor, he lost it overboard. Bad luck pursued him after that; and finally a companion who had heard him lament the loss of the talisman, suggested his having the prayer tattooed on his back. He did this, though he suffered much during the process.

Alas! there are many who are making the mistake of this poor, ignorant, superstitious sailor. There are multitudes who are putting their religion on the outside rather than on the inside. The Lord's Prayer cannot do any good on a man's back, but it may lift him up to fellowship with the angels if it be engraved on his heart. It is your heart that God asks for, and nothing else can possibly satisfy Him.

495. Pharisaic religion. (v. 9)

Rousseau dared to say that when the balance was struck between him and God he expected it would be in his favor. "I have worked much and untiringly," says Victor Hugo; "I have been able to pay my debt to God and to do what He expected of me."

496. Outward religion. (v. 9)

Hoffding tells us that in a Danish Protestant church, well on into the 19th century, worshipers maintained the custom of bowing when they passed a certain spot upon the wall. The reason, which no one knew, was discovered when removal of the whitewash revealed a Roman Catholic Madonna. Folk had bowed for three centuries before the place where the Madonna *used to be.*

497. The one a Pharisee and the other a publican. (v. 10)

One begins by reforming his neighbors and the other by reforming himself; the one by looking around, and the other

by looking within; the one by sweeping the streets of the city, the other by cleansing the rooms of his own house; the one by attempting to remodel society, the other by seeking a change in his own character.

498. God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men. (v. 11)

The Grecian fable of Icarus shows the danger of pride. Daedalus made wings for himself and his son, Icarus, and fitted them on with wax. They took their flight from the island of Crete, Daedalus, being humble, not venturing very high, and crossing safely over the sea of Cumae. But Icarus, resolved to outdo his father, mounted nearer to the sun, and the wax melting, he fell into that part of the sea which from him was named Icarian.

499. The Pharisee. (v. 11)

A person who is conceited is really very little. This is very well illustrated by an anecdote of Washington, who one day came across a small band of soldiers working very hard at raising some military works. The officer in command was a very pompous little fellow, and he was issuing orders in a very peremptory style. Washington, seeing how hard the men were working, dismounted from his horse, lent a helping hand and perspired freely, till the weight at which they were working was raised. Then turning to the officer he inquired why he, too, had not helped, and received the indignant reply, "Don't you know I'm the corporal?" "Oh, well," said Washington, "next time you men are raising so heavy a weight send for your commander-in-chief," and he rode off leaving the corporal dumbfounded. The vanity that parades its own virtues may be shown to be nothing more than a veneer of self respect over sordid meanness.

500. An aged Pharisee. (v. 11)

George Eliot pictures an octogenarian Pharisee in Mrs. Patten, one of the parishioners of the Rev. Amos Barton, in "Scenes of Clerical Life."

"When Mr. Barton comes to see me," says the old lady to her tea table companions, "he talks about nothing but my sins and my need o' marcy. Now, Mr. Hackit, I've never been a sinner. From the first beginning, when I went into service, I al'ys did my duty by my employers. I was a good wife as any's in the country: never aggravated my husband. The cheese-factor used to say my cheese was al'ys to be depended on. I've known women, as their cheese swelled a shame to be seen,

when their husbands had counted on the cheese-money to make up their rent; and yet they'd three gowns to my one. If I'm not to be saved, I know a many as are in a bad way."

501. Example of humility. (v. 13)

A farmer went with his son into a wheat field to see if it was ready for the harvest. "See, father," exclaimed the boy, "how straight these stems hold up their heads! They must be the best ones. Those that hang their heads down I am sure cannot be good for much." The farmer plucked a stalk of each kind, and said, "See here, foolish child! This stalk that stood so straight is light-headed, and almost good for nothing, while this that hung its head so modestly is full of the most beautiful grain."

502. The publican. (v. 13)

This man had made a great discovery, just as Sir Simpson the discoverer of the use of chloroform did. Someone asked him: "What do you consider your greatest discovery?" The great scientist replied: "That I am a sinner and that Christ is my Saviour."

503. God be merciful to me a sinner. (v. 13)

Bishop Daniel Wilson said: "When I look back on my life, I see so much sin, imperfection and corruption in every thought, word, and action, that my only hope of salvation is in coming simply to the Saviour as the poor publican did, with 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' "

504. I am that publican. (v. 13)

On his way to Sweden the celebrated scholar, Grotius, was overtaken by mortal sickness. On his death bed a clergyman reminded him of his sins on the one hand, and on the other, not of his eminent services and world-wide reputation, but of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, with a reference to the publican (Luke XVIII, 13). "I am that publican," replied Grotius, and then expired.

505. The Roman victor

The moral sense of the earlier Romans was keen enough to perceive that to the man whom they delighted to honor with a "triumph," there lurked a danger to his character in the excessive adulation accorded him. To neutralize, if possible, this danger, in the midst of the pompous parade of "triumph," a

slave, placed behind the great man, and holding a crown of Etruscan gold in his hand, had the duty of whispering often in his ears, "Remember that thou art but a man."

506. True humility. (v. 13)

The story is told about Gladstone, that on his way to Parliament he was accustomed to give a coin to a street sweeper. One day he did not see him. The great statesman then went to the constable on the beat and inquired of him why his friend the street sweeper was not at his work and learned that he was ill. Gladstone then went to the bare attic room where the man lived three flights up, sat down beside the sick man's bed, took his New Testament from his pocket and read a chapter. When he had given his sick friend the usual coin he proceeded to the Parliament and delivered one of his best speeches.

The humble man can stand on the highest mountain peak without getting dizzy and can go from there, down into the darkest valley, void of honor and power, yea, receive criticism instead of praise, and yet down there be peaceful, cheerful, serving and happy.

507. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. (v. 14)

Maeterlinck, when he was suggested for membership in the French Academy, the first Belgian in history to be so honored, wrote a letter to *Le Journal* asking that they choose instead "My old friend Emile Verhaeren, first, because he is my elder; second, because he is a very great poet, while I am only an industrious and conscientious prose writer. Anyone with patience could write what I have written; nobody could do what he has done. Only a poet is qualified to represent worthily a nation's greatness and heroism."

508. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. (v. 14)

King Christian IX of Denmark years ago visited Jutland. Entering a village school he asked the children: "Can you mention any great Danish kings?" In one breath the children shouted: "Knut the Great, Waldemar the Conqueror, Christian IV." A little boy, to whom the teacher had whispered something, raised his hand. "Can you mention others?" asked the king. "Yes, Christian IX." "What great thing has he done?" continued the king. The boy was embarrassed and replied: "I do not know." "Be comforted, my boy," said the king, "I do not know either."

The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

Mark 7: 31-37

509. And they bring to Him one that was deaf. (v. 32)

In deserts, when caravans are in want of water, they send a rider some distance ahead; then, after a little space, another follows; and then, after a short interval, another. As soon as the first man finds water, before he stoops to drink, he shouts aloud the word "Come." So the shout is passed along, until the whole wilderness echoes with the word "Come." So it is with Christian men and women. It is not enough to find the living water ourselves. We must say "Come" to those who are searching for it.

510. And they bring unto Him one. (v. 32)

There came to America a great Chinese statesman as an ambassador of China to our government. After a service of some years he was returning to China and stopped over in New York for Sunday. A Chinese preacher, pastor of a Chinese Christian church in New York, called up the great statesman over the telephone, inviting him to attend church that morning. The reply came back over the phone, "I shall not do it! I met the Christian missionaries in China and became deeply impressed with Christianity; and when my government sent me as her ambassador to your Christian America, I made up my mind to become a Christian and join the first Christian church where they asked me. I have spent these years in your Christian America, and this is the first time one word has been said to me about my soul. I shall not come to your church." And Wu Ting Fang hung up the receiver and turned his face to the setting sun to die a heathen.—*T. T. Martin*

511. And they bring to Him one. (v. 32)

What sacrifices are you willing to make that someone may come to Christ? Let me tell you a true story. When a boat sank off the coast of England a few years ago and the passengers were struggling in the water and swimming about, there was among them a young Salvation Army officer. He caught sight of a spar floating on the water and swam toward it. It was just large enough to hold him up. Soon another head appeared and another young man came toward the spar, but it soon became evident that it was not strong enough for two.

The Salvation Army man said to his companion in distress: "Are you a Christian?" "No." "Are you ready to meet your God?" "No, what do I care about Him now?" "Then, I will let go. Save yourself if you can."

The Salvation Army man was lost in the waves and the other young man was saved. He came under Christian influences, was converted and became an active worker for Christ. Bramwell Booth, who related this story, says that the young man himself told him of the incident.

512. And they bring to Him one. (v. 32)

Each member of the Church must feel an individual responsibility in fulfilling the exalted mission of the Church. This is a work that cannot be relegated to others, a service that cannot be accomplished by a proxy.

Mrs. Julia Ward Howe once made an earnest appeal to an eminent statesman in behalf of a man who was suffering a great injustice. He replied: "I am so much taken up with plans for the benefit of the race that I have no time for individuals." Mrs. Howe's terse comment was: "When last heard from, our Maker had not reached this altitude."

This is a telling illustration of a great truth. This world must be saved by the individual Christians seeking the individual man and leading him to Christ. This was Christ's method, and after the passing of nineteen centuries no better method has ever been discovered. Christ's demand is that His follower shall consecrate his thought, his talent, his affection, and a reasonable portion of his time to the fulfilling of the great commission. This is your supreme work, O disciple of Christ. This is the summons of His Church. This is the greatest need of the twentieth century.

513. His business. (v. 32)

John Vassar once talked to a woman in a depot about giving her heart to Christ. When her husband learned of it he told his wife she ought to have sent him about his business. She replied: "If you had been there, you would have thought it was his business."

514. Bring them to Jesus

Spurgeon was once offered a thousand dollars a night for fifty nights by an American lecture bureau. He replied, "I can do better; I can stay in London and win fifty souls to Christ." And Spurgeon was right. It is better, far better, to lead a single human being into fellowship with God than to possess any of the perishing things of earth.

515. Looking up to heaven, he sighed. (v. 34)

Too often we sigh and look within; Jesus sighed and looked without. We sigh, and look down; Jesus sighed, and looked up. We sigh, and look to earth; Jesus sighed, and looked to heaven. We sigh, and look to man; Jesus sighed, and looked to God.

516. Jesus looked up to heaven. (v. 34)

In working for God, first look to heaven. It is a grand plan. Over and over again, our Lord Jesus Christ looked to heaven and said, "Father." Let us imitate Him; although standing on the earth, let us have our conversation in heaven. Before you go out, if you would feed the world, if you would be a blessing in the midst of spiritual dearth and famine, lift up your head to heaven. Then your very face will shine, your very garments will smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces where you have been with your God and Saviour. There will be stamped upon you the dignity and power of the service of the Most High God.

517. Looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith to him, Ephphatha, that is, be opened. (v. 34)

The Son of God in doing good
Was fain to look to heaven and sigh:
And shall the heirs of sinful blood
Seek joy unmixed in charity?
God will not let love's work impart
Full solace, lest it steal the heart;
Be thou content in tears to sow,
Blessing, like Jesus, in thy woe.—*Keble.*

518. He hath done all things well. (v. 37)

Bishop G. H. Wilkinson wrote to a friend in 1863:

"At the time when the body is worn, and faith weak, all seems commonplace and full of failure. We look back and say from our hearts, 'He hath done *all* things well.' I often think of the foreign cathedrals one used to see. They are so surrounded by little dirty houses and shops that the grandeur of the building is quite lost, but go out of the town and stand on the calm hilltop and look down upon the whole scene; the old cathedral rises in all its fair proportions and the little dirty buildings are scarcely visible, or if seen at all, only help to throw out the old Gothic pile. So is it with our life, when from the quiet of a still hour we look down upon its varied scenes."

519. Looking up

It is related of Mr. Astor, that, when once fording the Susquehanna on horseback, he found himself becoming so dizzy as to be about to lose his seat. Suddenly he received a blow on his chin from a hunter, who was his companion, with the words, "Look up!" He did so and recovered his balance. It was looking on the turbulent water that endangered his life; and looking *up* saved it.

520. The uplooker

The best definition of man as originally created is found in the word *anthropos,* by which the Greeks characterized him. The word literally means "the uplooker." He was made erect with his face toward the throne of God. In other words, he was a rational being not only able to think but as Kepler said, "able to think God's thoughts after Him." In this way he was differentiated from all lower orders of life.

521. Look up

It is told about Michael Angelo that by his prolonged and unremitting toil upon the frescoed domes which he wrought he acquired such an habitual upturn of the countenance that as he walked the streets men called him "a visionary with the heaven-turned face." If we are much in secret prayer it will give us a heavenward looking mind and heart and a peace and courage earth cannot give.

The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

Luke 10: 23-27

522. Thou shalt love. (v. 27)

On the wall of the chapel which Moltke built in his grounds at Kreisan, over against his own coffin and that of his wife, is a crucifix, and above it is the text, "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

523. Condensed commandments. (v. 27)

The infidel, Thomas Paine, once said to Rev. Dr. Staughton: "Mr. Staughton, what a pity it is that a man has not some comprehensive and perfect rule for the government of his life." Mr. Staughton replied, "There is such a rule." "What is that?" asked Paine. Mr. Staughton repeated the words in our text, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." "Oh," said Paine, "that's in your Bible;' and immediately walked away.

524. Thy neighbor as thyself. (v. 27)

Once Turner, the famous artist, was on a committee whose business it was to arrange about hanging the pictures for exhibition at the Royal Academy. When the committee had nearly finished, and the walls were crowded, Turner's attention was called to a picture by an unknown artist who had no friend in the Academy to watch over his interests. "That is an excellent picture," said Mr. Turner. "It must have a place somewhere." "Impossible," said the other members. "There is no room left." "That picture must have a place somewhere," repeated the generous artist, and then he deliberately took down one of his own pictures and put this painting of the unknown artist in its place.—*Gwynne, "Seven Hundred Stories"*

525. The sum of duty like the ocean. (v. 28)

When a man is told that the whole of religion and morality is summed up in the two commandments to love God and to love our neighbor, he is ready to cry, like Charoba in Gebir at the first sight of the sea, "Is this the mighty ocean? Is this all?" Yes, all! but how small a part of it do your eyes survey! Only trust yourself to it; launch out upon it; sail abroad over it; you will find it has no end; it will carry you round the world.—*"British Weekly"*

526. A near relative. (v. 29)

A very sick officer went to a mineral spring for the benefit of his health; but the hotel keepers refused to admit him, lest he should die while under their roof. At the last hotel, a gentleman came forward and said: "This officer is my near relative. He may have my bed, and I will sleep on the sofa."

The landlord consented, and the half-fainting man was carried to the gentleman's room. When he had rested a little, his first question was: "May I ask your name, my kind friend? How are you related to me?"

"Through our Lord Jesus Christ; for I have learned from Him, that my neighbor is my brother."

527. Who is my neighbor? (v. 29)

A group of Italian Protestants, forced to find temporary quarters during the building of their own church, asked permission to hold services in another Protestant edifice at hours when the regular congregation was not making use of the building. The desired permission was refused. "What," said the American-born congregation, "let those dirty dagoes use our church! It wouldn't be fit for decent people to come into after them."—*"The Christian Century"*

528. Who is my neighbor? (v. 29)

A negro physician, after a complete training, returned to the town in which he had grown up and began practice among his own race. The other medical men in the town told him to leave, and he felt that he had no alternative but to go.—*"The Christian Century"*

529. Wishing to justify himself. (v. 29)

Inclination snatches arguments,
To make indulgence seem judicious choice.—*George Eliot.*

530. Who is my neighbor? (v. 29)

In a prominent New York church where the crowds were pressing down the aisles, the usher showed a Chinese couple into a pew just as two Americans had reached the spot. "Pshaw!" exclaimed the woman, "why did you let those heathen go in first?" One shrinks from the proper description of that attitude. It is of course, discourtesy, provincialism; but it is more. It is one of the most contemptible and ruinous sins which today are destroying human life and making dangerously difficult the solution of our social and international prob-

lems; a bigoted and ignorant prejudice that damns whole classes and races at a swoop. It does literally what the slang phrase suggests: it thinks in bunches.—*Fosdick.*

531. Who is my neighbor? (v. 29)

A professional visitor found a young married woman, a Russian Jewess, living in a quarter largely inhabited by Gentiles. The girl was desperately lonely, and about to become a mother. The visitor advised her, in case of sudden need, to ask one of her neighbors to telephone for help. "There isn't anyone to call," she answered. "All the people who live around here are Christians."—*"The Christian Century"*

532. Example of brotherly love. (v. 33)

Dr. Halbeck, a missionary of the Church of England in the south of Africa, from the top of a neighboring hill saw lepers at work. He noticed two particularly, sowing peas in the field. One had no hands; the other had no feet, these members being wasted away by disease. The one who wanted the hands was carrying the other, who wanted the feet, upon his back; and he again carried the bag of seed, and dropped a pea every now and then, which the other pressed into the ground with his feet: and so they managed the work of one man between the two. Such should be the true union of the members of Christ's Body, in which all the members should have the same care for one another.—*Dickinson's "Dictionary of Illustration"*

533. The name of the Good Samaritan. (v. 33)

John F. Oberlin, "the saint of the Protestant Church," as Dr. Hase calls him, was traveling on one occasion from Strassburg. It was in winter. The ground was deeply covered with snow, and the roads were almost impassable. He had reached the middle of his journey, and was so exhausted that he could stand up no longer. He commended himself to God and yielded to what he felt to be the sleep of death. He knew not how long he slept, but suddenly became conscious of someone rousing him up. Before him stood a wagoner, the wagon not far away. He gave him a little wine and food and the spirit of life returned. The driver then helped him on the wagon and brought him to the next village. Oberlin was profuse in his thanks, and offered money to his benefactor, which he refused to accept. "It is only a duty to help one another," said the wagon driver, "and it is next thing to an insult to offer a reward for such a service." Oberlin replied, "Then tell me your name at least, that I may have you in thankful remem-

brance before God." "I see," said the wagoner, "that you are a minister of the gospel. Please tell me the name of the good samaritan." "That," said Oberlin, "I cannot do, for it was not put on record." Then the wagoner said, "Until you can tell me his name, permit me to withhold mine."—*J. H. Horst*

534. Personal contact with suffering. (v. 33)

We need to be brought out of our luxurious houses and into personal contact with needy ones. God has linked the poor and rich together. Sir Robert Peel's daughter wore a beautiful ermine coat that was purchased from a fashionable store in the West End of London, but which had been worked upon in one of the lofty tenement houses of East London. The sewing-woman who made the coat was ill of fever, the contagion of which was carried in the beautiful cloak that soon enwrapped the peer's daughter, from which she died. So God says, "Neglect no portion of your city, or it will send back its pestilential airs into your homes and your children's hearts."—*G. M. G. Dana*

535. And went to him and bound up his wounds . . . and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow . . . (v. 34, 35)

'Tis not enough to help the feeble up,
But to support him after.—*Shakespeare.*

The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity

Luke 17: 11-19

536. Modern lepers. (v. 17)

"Were not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?"

The steamer "Lady Elgin" was sinking. It was a chilly evening in early September. She was brilliantly lighted and loaded with excursionists. She had almost reached Chicago, but before help could be put out she would be gone, and the crowd upon the shore watched her, powerless to help. But not all of them were helpless. Two brothers, students in a theological seminary, plunged through the crowd with a rope in their arms. Nat, the elder, a powerful man and a trained swimmer, leaped into the waves. Inch by inch he fought his way through until he reached the ship and climbed aboard. A moment later he plunged back with a woman in his arms. The crowd hauled him in, choking and cold, but still strong. Again he plunged in, and again and again. Seventeen women and children he brought to shore. At last he sank exhausted. Yet still the cries rang in his ears. After a bit he raised himself and again plunged in. Again and again. Twenty-three human lives Nat Spencer saved before his strength entirely left him. For weeks he lay delirious. The twenty-three whom he had saved scattered to their homes. The bodies of the three hundred who were lost had been tossed up by the waves, the nation had begun to forget the tragedy. But the twenty-three whom he had saved, surely they did not forget? Surely they were grateful? This is the simple truth about those twenty-three: Not one of them ever came back to thank Nat Spencer for what he had done. Not one of them even wrote him a letter. Nat Spencer went out into life an invalid, having given his strength for twenty-three people who did not so much as say "Thank you."—*"Woman's Home Companion"*

537. Thanksgiving (v. 17)

Two angels were sent out from heaven, according to the story, each one carrying a basket to gather up men's prayers and thank-offerings. The angel whose duty it was to gather up the thank-offerings had a large basket and the other a little one. Both were troubled on their return. The prayer basket was full to overflowing and still many remain but the thanks-

giving angel had only three in his basket. That is a picture of man, always ready to ask for what he needs, but forgetting to thank for what he has received.

538. Thankfulness. (v. 17)

Even the heathen sometimes put the Christian to shame. I read in ancient history that Plato, the philosopher, gave thanks to his gods every day for five things. First, that he was a human being and not a brute. Did you ever thank God that you were not born a brute? Plato did every day. In the second place, he thanked his gods every day that he was a man. Have you men ever thanked God that you were men? Third, he thanked his gods every day that he was a Greek. Have you ever thanked God that you are an American? In the fourth place, he thanked his gods every day that he was an Athenian. Have you ever thanked God that you are in Connecticut or Massachusetts or California? Fifth, he thanked his gods every day that he was born in days that he might have Socrates as his teacher. Have you ever thanked God for the teachers and instructors that you have had, who have made you what you are?

539. Where are the nine? (v. 17)

Tradition tells us that these men got the leprosy a second time and perished. But whether they did or not, one thing is certain: God himself put the question, "Where are the nine?" All faithful pastors meet men like these; when they are on sick beds they want prayer, the service of God, health and help, and they make all kinds of promises to serve God when they get well again; but let them be well three weeks and where are they? The promises are forgotten, they are ungrateful to God for all He has done for them.

540. Daddy, I want you. (v. 18)

Gipsy Smith tells how, after being away from home seven months, he and his family attended a bazaar. Desiring to please his little girl he handed her some money, saying, "Take it, Lillah, and buy what you like." Her eyes filled with tears and she cried, "Daddy, I don't want your old money; I want you!" How highly suggestive this is! God wants us first of all. "Son, daughter, give me thine heart!" He wants our love, our praise, our devotion, our gratitude, our appreciation.

541. Tell me so. (v. 18)

An English pastor once said to his people: "O my dear people! If you love me, tell me so. Tell me now, while I am with you, while I am yearning for your love and sympathy, while I need all the help you can give me." Many a pastor feels the same way, but he is not so frank in telling his people. If you want to strengthen your pastor's morale, make his sermons more effective, greatly increase his pastoral efficiency, give him judicious praise. "You did me good"; "You helped me"; "I want to thank you for the moral help of your example." Such words require little effort, yet they bring new hope, new life, new inspiration, whenever uttered.

"A mere word of cheer in the shadow of night,
When discouragement darkens the way,
Will illumine our hearts with the glorious light
Of a hopeful and sun-brightened day."

542. Nine expressed no gratitude. (v. 18)

Our Scripture tells about Christ's healing ten lepers one day. Nine expressed no gratitude whatever. One fell at the feet of the Master and tried to tell him how deeply grateful he was. Commenting upon this incident, Dr. Charles F. Aked remarked: "One decent man out of ten. There are times when one is tempted to say that this is about the usual proportion. Ingratitude seems to be the most popular sin in the world. Perhaps because it is so easy. The sin of ingratitude is the broad highway to envy, malice and all uncharitableness. Shall we agree that ninety per cent of the human race is ingrate, ninety per cent careless of the ordinary courtesies and decencies of life, ninety per cent callously indifferent to the pain which their ingratitude inflicts upon the tender hearts of those who have loved and served them?"

543. Ingratitude in home life. (v. 18)

How about ingratitude in home life? It is so easy to form the habit in the home of accepting favors and kindnesses without any recognition. This unfortunate habit undermines the sweetness and beauty of home life. Carlyle had a very devoted wife who sacrificed everything for his sake, but he never gave her a single expression of appreciation for which her heart yearned. She came to regard herself as the most miserable woman in London and evidently died of heart hunger. After her death, Carlyle, reading her diary realized the truth. Froude found him at her grave suffering intense remorse and exclaiming, "If I had only known!"

544. A league of appreciation. (v. 18)

When Franklin K. Lane was Secretary of the Interior he addressed the students of Williams' College and said among other things: "We are a great people for organization, but we are one organization short. No other hundred million people that ever lived have been so unionized for one purpose or another, but we need one more. Where is our League of Appreciation? There should be a common understanding that where a man performs his duty he should get more compensation than his salary."

545. Deo gratias. (v. 18)

We are told that St. Felix, whenever he received a gift for his cloister, said: *"Deo gratias,"* thanking, not the giver, but God who prompts us to give. He said this so often that the boys on the street began to call him "Brother *Deo Gratias,*" and he has gone down in history under that name. We can scarcely conceive of a better nickname than that.

546. Appreciation coming too late.

The deceased Bishop H. C. Potter bears the following testimony: "Several years ago some of us were assembled in Calvary Church, New York, to bear our testimony to the life and influence of the late Dr. Edward Washburn. I may now venture to violate the confidence of a domestic incident which transpired then, and which I think you will own to have its significance and appropriateness here. One after another, Phillips Brooks and others like him, arose in their places in that crowded study to tell what they owed to the genius, to the high spirit, to the unswerving loyalty to duty, to the splendid courage, to the rare scholarship, to the philosophic insight, to the prophetic utterance of Edward Washburn. The testimony was done. At the door all the time there stood a slender woman, who had stood during life nearest to him of whom we spoke. I never shall forget her face, the passion of it and the pathos of it, not the power, tender but reproachful, with which she spoke, when at length we were still, 'O, if you loved Edward so, why didn't you tell him of it while he lived?"—*W. A. Schruff*

The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

Matthew 6: 24-35

547. No neutrality. (v. 24)

This I say unto you plainly beforehand, I will hear and know nothing of neutrality. His highness must be friend or foe. When I come to his border he must declare himself hot or cold. The battle is between God and the devil. Will his highness hold with God? Let him stand on my side. Will he prefer to hold with the devil? Then he must fight against me. A third position will not be granted him.—*Gustavus Adolphus to the Elector of Brandenburg*

548. The service of the heart supreme. (v. 24)

When a statute was made in Queen Elizabeth's reign that all should come to church, the Papists sent to Rome to know the Pope's pleasure; he returned them this answer, it is said: "Bid the Catholics in England give me their hearts, and let the Queen take the rest."—*Gurnall*

549. No man can serve two masters. (v. 24)

When you see a dog following two men, you know not to which of them he belongs while they walk together; but let them come to a parting road, and one go one way, and the other another way, then you will know which is the dog's master. So at times will you and the world go hand in hand. While a man may have the world, and a religious profession too, we cannot tell which is the man's master, God or the world: but stay till the man comes to a parting road; God calls him this way, and the world calls him that way. Well, if God be his master, he follows religion, and lets the world go; but if the world be his master, then he follows the world and the lusts thereof, and lets God, and conscience, and religion go. — *R. Erskine*

550. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. (v. 24)

In the ruins of Pompeii there was found the petrified body of a woman with her jewels in her hands, which she had spent her time in gathering up instead of fleeing from the doomed city. By her delay she lost her precious jewels and her life. Multitudes are making the same mistake. In trying to get earth and heaven they lose both.

551. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. (v. 24)

There are many today who act in exactly the same manner as the king who built two altars in his temple, and sacrificed on the one to Christ and on the other to the devil because he did not wish to offend either but to remain in the good graces of both.

552. Trouble from a trifle. (v. 25)

For seven months an expert accountant searched the books of a certain grain company of St. Paul for an error of an even $100. There was that shortage in the cash. Whom to suspect the firm did not know. They spent much more than the $100 trying to track the matter down.

And then, after having gone over the books time and again, the accountant's pencil chanced to stop on an item of $140. The pencil point rested on the figure "1", when the figure suddenly broke in two and slid down the page!

Upon examination it proved that the supposed figure "1" was a fly's leg which had become pasted in front of the $40, raising the item to all appearances $100. The fly had undoubtedly been crushed in the book when it was closed.—*"Cleveland Press"*

553. Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. (v. 32)

The sense of adequate protection is a great blessing. This is made plain to us by a little incident drawn from life. It is the story of a boy who, with his father, was climbing a steep and dangerous place and as they were ascending together, his mother's voice was heard from below: "Have you a good hold of your father?" The quick response of the lad was: "No, but my father has a good hold of me!" Now that is the main thing for us all to realize, that our Father God has a good hold of us. When this is true, then the divine protection becomes an experience of priceless value.

554. The business man's supreme test. (v. 33)

Queen Elizabeth asked a rich merchant to go on a mission for the crown. The merchant remonstrated, saying that such long absence would be fatal to his business. "You take care of my business," replied the queen, "and I will take care of yours." When he returned he found that his business, through the patronage and care of the queen, had increased in volume, and he was richer than when he left. So every business man can afford to place the interests of Christ's kingdom first; for the

promise is clear and unmistakable, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Make money for Christ, and He will make money for you. Supply His needs, and He will supply yours. Keep His laws, and He will keep you. Do His will, and He will look after your welfare. If losses come He will see that they are ultimate gains. Link your destiny in time and eternity with Jesus Christ, and bankruptcy will be impossible. Prize the spiritual above the material. Transmute the seen and temporal into the unseen and eternal. Lay up treasures in heaven, so that death, which impoverishes the rich worldling, will be your enrichment. Ever seek Christ's "Well done" here, and you will receive it hereafter.—*A. C. Dixon*

555. Seek ye first the kingdom of God. (v. 33)

Over the triple doorways of the Cathedral of Milan there are three inscriptions spanning the splendid archway. Over one is carved a beautiful wreath of roses, and underneath is the legend: "All that which *pleases* is but for a moment." Over another is sculptured a cross, and there are the words, "All that which *troubles* is but for a moment." But underneath the great central entrance of the main aisle is the inscription, *"That only is important which is eternal."* If we realize this, we will not live for the moment.

556. But seek ye first the kingdom of God. (v. 33)

It is said of Mr. Samuel Colgate, a trusted servant of God, that when a mere lad he was thrown upon the world to care for himself. Wearied of the slow country life, he directed his steps toward the great city of New York, hoping to realize a larger income from the labor of his hands. He traveled with the driver of the canal team, and when the place was reached where Samuel was to take a different course, the rough and strong hand of the driver grasped him by the hand, and he said: "Samuel, seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these (temporal) things shall be added unto you." Kneeling the good man invoked God's blessing on the lad, and they parted. Samuel did seek first the "kingdom of God." He gave himself to Christ. Today he not only stands among the first business men of the land, but he is noted far and wide as a noble Christian gentleman. It pays every young man and young woman to start out in life with this great truth in mind, to make God first, self last. God knows the things we have need of, and will freely supply all.

557. Blessedness of living one day at a time. (v. 34)

An inspiring and comforting truth of this text is that the strength which our loving heavenly Father gives us will be graduated according to our need. So it should be, to be in keeping with the conditions of our human life. The engine generates the steam to drive it as it rushes along the shining rails. If the effort were made to put into the boiler at the beginning of the journey, sufficient steam to send it to its distant goal, the engine would be blown into a thousand pieces. And so God deals with us on the day by day and hour by hour plan. He sent the manna to the children of Israel fresh every morning; and His promise to us is that His blessings shall be renewed to us day by day.—*Straton*

558. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. (v. 34)

When Rudyard Kipling visited America, some years ago, he played on the deck of the steamer with rare buoyancy with his little daughter, Josephine. Shortly after coming to New York, Josephine, whom he always called Joe, was taken seriously ill. Soon afterwards his own illness became alarming. During its earlier stages, he frequently asked, "How is Joe?" Then his own illness became so serious that, for a time, the consciousness of his daughter disappeared. In his convalescence he again asked, "How is Joe. Where is she? Why does she not come to me?"

But Joe had gone down into and had passed through the dark river, during her father's serious illness. When he asked these questions, she was asleep under the snows of an American winter. How merciful was God that he hid these coming sorrows from father and child during their joyous days on the deck of an Atlantic steamer!

Yes, God is very merciful to us, in that He draws a curtain over the future. Very foolish, therefore, is it for us to load tomorrow's burden, too, upon that of today; and equally foolish is it to presume upon the success of the joy which shall be ours tomorrow.

Avoiding both of these extremes, the highest philosophy of life is attained when we reach that point where, quietly and gratefully, we become willing to trust God absolutely and to live out our lives one day at a time!—*Straton*

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

Luke 7: 11-17

559. Death. (v. 12)

An old Greek legend tells us that one day a rich young man was out driving and came upon an old woman who was walking along the street. The young man offered her a ride which she accepted. On alighting from the carriage the woman was transformed and the young man in his surprise asked her who she was. She replied: "I am Death," and in return for the young man's kindness she agreed to send him three messengers to warn him of her next coming. The young man lived a carefree life knowing that he would receive three warnings before death came. After a time his mother died and he was, of course, very sorry, but went on living in the same way. A year or two after that his sister died, but that made no change in his mode of life. Then finally he himself became very ill and suffered greatly but he did not fear death, being sure that the messengers would first come. After having suffered for some time the old woman one day made her appearance and said: "Now I have come to claim you and take you with me." The young man was not only very much surprised but very indignant, saying that she had not kept her promise to send the three messengers first. "Oh, yes," she replied, "I have kept my promise and I have sent you three messengers. The first came when your mother died, the second when your sister died, and the third messenger was your own illness. Now I have come and you must go with me."

560. The funeral of a home. (v. 12)

There are ruined homes around you today. Among the many funerals I have attended, one stands out in my memory with a pathos all its own, because it was the funeral of a *home* as well as of a person. That home, as I knew it first, was very bright and happy; a husband, a happy, loving wife, three girls and one darling boy. But one dark night the husband was taken home from the railway a mangled corpse. For a year the widow bravely struggled on. But her heart was broken. She fell into decline. The funeral day had come. When it was over the children were to part. The two youngest were to go to an institution. One was going to a relative, another to a friend. It was the funeral of a *home* as well as of a *mother!* I shall never

forget that funeral chamber. Above the fireplace was a neat little text, and on it the words, "Home, sweet home!" In front, on the table, lay the coffin with its unresponsive face. In the corner the four little children breaking the silence with their sobs. I thought of that mother in the bridal dawn of her wedded life hanging up the text there with fond assurance. "Home, *sweet* home!" Yes, it had been so while it lasted; but it would be so no more. This was the funeral of a home.—*Mackay*

561. Think of death. (v. 12)

A fine story is told of Duke Henry of Bavaria. Once he was praying fervently at the grave of St. Emmeram in Ratisbon. Maybe he was praying for a happy death. Suddenly he noticed on the wall a shining figure 3. What could that mean? "Shall I die in three days?" He began immediately to prepare himself. The three days passed, and Henry was still alive. "Then in three weeks!" Again he held himself in readiness for death. These three weeks also passed. "Now it is certain, in three years!" When the time was up, the duke even had his shroud, and coffin, and grave ready. Priests were called to say the prayers for the dying. All of a sudden the bells began to ring, and out of the distance came the sound of a trumpet. The royal standard was floating in the breeze at the head of a troop of knights. Coming near, they asked, "Where is the Duke of Bavaria?" These messengers were shown the open grave. You can imagine their astonishment and fright. "Duke Henry is dead!" Then Henry, who thought his time had come, appeared and asked, "What do you want of me?" A great cry went up: "Long live Emperor Henry!" Henry had become emperor after three years, but he had also become a saint, because all the while he kept death before his eyes.—*Kreugler*

562. A visible sermon. (v. 12)

Archbishop Leighton, returning home one morning, was asked by his sister, "Have you been hearing a sermon?" "I've met a sermon," was the answer. The sermon he had met was a corpse on its way to the grave. The preacher was Death.

563. Sympathy. (v. 13)

When Lord Houghton had lost his wife, Tennyson wrote him this letter: "I was the other day present at a funeral, and one of the chief mourners reached me her hand silently, almost over the grave and I as silently gave her mine. No words were possible. And this little note that can do really nothing to help you in your great sorrow is just such a reaching out of the hand

to you, my old college comrade of forty years' standing, to show you that I am thinking of you."

What a thrill of comfort those simple words must have given the mourner. The poet entered into his friend's sorrow and shared it with him. That was the highest gift Tennyson could have given his friend.

564. Sympathy. (v. 13)

William Dean Howells is responsible for the vividly true sentence: "The way to be universally interesting is to be universally interested."

565. Jesus comforting, sympathetic. (v. 13)

A great word is our word "sympathy." It comes from two Greek words, *syn,* "with," and *pathos,* "suffering," "passion." Sympathy, therefore, is a feeling corresponding to that which another experiences; it is the quality of being affected by the joy or sorrow of another; it is fellow feeling. It is similar in meaning to the word "compassion." Sympathy is Greek; compassion is Latin. Compassion is from *com,* "together," and *patior, passus,* "to suffer." It is the sense of sorrow excited by the suffering of another.

566. He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. (v. 13)

Can you not hear the sympathetic tone in which Jesus speaks these words? How do you show your sympathy with those who are bereaved and in trouble? Let me tell you how one woman does. She has few opportunities for service. Every night she gathers the daily papers which have been thrown aside. She cuts the list of death notices from them and placing these before her she kneels and in prayer commends those in sorrow to the gracious help of her Father in heaven. She does not know them, but they are in trouble, and in the only way she can she ministers to them. Thus she cultivates her gift of sympathy. And if I am not mistaken such service ranks high in the eyes of God.

567. Comfort in bereavement. (v. 13)

A father had lost his child and was very unhappy. He went out early in the morning in the fields, and an angel met him. There was beautiful dew on the ground, and the angel said, "Look on the dew;" and the father said, "How beautiful!" And while they were talking, the sun rose, and the dew all melted

away; and the father said, "I am very sorry that the beautiful dew did not stay." The angel said, "Look up at the sky; look at that cloud; see that beautiful rainbow. The drops of dew that were on the blades of grass, are up there making that rainbow." The father said, "I am glad the dew is gone up into the rainbow."—*James Vaughan*

568. Jesus' funeral sermons. (v. 14

A good many years ago, when I was a young man, I used to spend the summers in Chicago, and when the ministers were gone away, they used to send me to attend funerals. One day I was called suddenly to attend a funeral. There were to be a great many business men not Christians there. I said: "This is my opportunity, I will give them a Christian sermon." I tried to find one of Christ's funeral sermons, and I found that He broke up every funeral He attended. The dead couldn't stay dead where He was.—*D. L. Moody*

The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

Luke 14: 1-11

569. Fate of the Sabbath breaker. (v. 1)

A worldly man, living on the shores of a beautiful lake, built a yacht for pleasure excursions. The minister called upon him, and expressed his fears that it would demoralize the young people, and prove a Sabbath breaker. The man said, defiantly, "That is just what I'll name my boat. She shall be called "The Sabbath Breaker.'" She was launched upon a Sunday, and her trial trip was made also upon a Sunday. Many were invited to the excursion. Her ill-omened name floated on the flag, and caused many to refuse to go on board. A large company went, and mirth and music made them forget their fears. Suddenly, a squall of wind struck the boat. She capsized, and fifty of her passengers were drowned. Just above the water floated her name, "The Sabbath Breaker."—*Foster's Cyclopedia*

570. Sunday. (v. 1)

"On Sundays you can see the cathedral from this window," said a hotel keeper to his guest when he had shown him to his room. "Why on Sundays?" the guest asked. "Because then the factory chimneys are at rest," was the answer.

571. Ye shall keep my Sabbaths. (v. 1)

It is related of Sir Francis Drake that, in his three years' sailings around the world, he lost but one whole day in his reckonings, which was inconsiderable for so long a time. But how many of us are there who lose one day in every week, one in seven, neglecting the Sabbath and not once thinking of all God's benefits toward us.

572. Sunday. (v. 1)

"Look at my grain," said a scoffing farmer to a clergyman neighbor. "I plowed on Sunday; I planted on Sunday; I harrowed on Sunday; I harvested on Sunday; and I never had a better crop. What do you say to that?" "I only say," said the minister, "that the Lord doesn't settle all his accounts on the first of October."

573. Heaven of the Sabbath breaker. (v. 3)

There is a place in Paris, called the Champs Elysees, or the plain of heaven, a beautiful public walk, with trees and gardens. It is the chief scene of the Parisian's Sabbath desecration, and an awful scene it is. O, thought I, if this be the heaven the Parisian loves, he will never enjoy the pure heaven that is above. —*M'Cheyne*

574. Sunday religion. (v. 3)

In a little New England city there is a town clock, presented many years ago as a gift, but which has not been improved by age. One of its peculiarities is that on Sundays it always strikes the hours correctly, according to the true "standard" time, but just as soon as Monday morning comes it is not to be depended on, and all the remainder of the week it keeps growing worse from day to day. The explanation of this apparent freak is that the keeper of the clock always winds it up on Sunday and then sets it right, and so for that single day it is a tolerably safe guide, but when Sunday is past, it is not to be relied upon at all. Is not the religion of some people very like the working of this New England clock? Surely a very poor sort of religion! Better "serve God truly *all the days* of our life." — *Gwynne, "Seven Hundred Stories"*

575. Occasional goodness. (v. 3)

They say that at Versailles, near Paris, the magnificent fountains on the weekday are dry and repulsive, grass grown, weed covered. But visit them on the Sabbath Day and they are tossing all their glorious waters high in the air; every Neptune, triton or nymph flashing forth in the splendor of the magnificent water shower: a fair, sad picture of Sabbath religion. How different from the flowing river always pouring forth its musical, fertile and irrigating stream. Some faiths are technical, temporary and occasional. They are like the waterworks of the fountain on a fete day; then the bolts are turned off and the fountains cease to play. On certain great occasions, or, in certain public forms we are saying, "I go, Sir," but the largest portion of other times shows that we go not.

576. The saintship of service. (v. 3-5)

There is a legend in the Greek Church about the two favored saints, St. Cassianus, the type of monastic ascetisism, individual character, which "bids for cloistered cell its neighbor and its work farewell," and St. Nicholas, the type of generous, active, unselfish, laborious Christianity. St. Cassianus enters heaven

and Christ says to him, "What hast thou seen on earth, Cassianus?" "I saw," he answered, "a peasant floundering with his wagon in the marsh." "Didst thou help him?" "No!" "Why not?" "I was coming before Thee," said St. Cassianus, "and I was afraid of soiling my white robes." Then St. Nicholas enters heaven all covered with mud and mire. "Why so stained and soiled, St. Nicholas?" said the Lord. "I saw a peasant floundering in the marsh," said St. Nicholas, "and I put my shoulder to the wheel and helped him out." "Blessed art thou," answered the Lord; "thou didst well; thou didst better than Cassianus." And He blessed St. Nicholas with fourfold approval.—*Dean Farrar.*

577. The inferior seat preferred. (v. 8)

It is said that General Gordon used to sit in the gallery of the church among the poor, until his fame becoming known, he was asked to sit in the luxurious seats appointed for the grandees, but that he preferred to keep the seat in which he had so long sat unnoticed and unknown.

578. Pride cast down. (v. 9)

Charles V was so sure of victory when he invaded France, that he ordered his historians to prepare plenty of paper to record his exploits. But he lost his army by famine and disease, and returned crestfallen.

579. Amice ascende superius. (v. 10)

Cardinal Perraud, in his "Life of Pere Gratry," describes his last watch by the death bed of his friend. "My dear father," he said, "it was you who called me to the service of God, and to you, after Him, I owe my vocation. Do you remember, how twenty-five years ago, at the Normal School, you so often repeated to me the words of the Saviour in the Gospel, *'Amice ascende superius'?"* He pressed my hand, to show me that he heard and understood.

580. Humility. (v. 10)

The man who is to take a high place before his fellows must take a low place before his God.

The men who stand straightest in the presence of sin bow lowest in the presence of God.—*F. B. Meyer*

581. Humility a safeguard. (v. 10)

A French general, riding on horseback at the head of his troops, heard a soldier complain, "It is very easy for the general to command us forward while he rides and we walk." Then the

general dismounted, and compelled the grumbler to get on the horse. Coming through a ravine a bullet from a sharpshooter struck the rider, and he fell dead. Then the general said, "How much safer it is to walk than to ride!"

582. Whosoever exalteth himself. (v. 11)

In real life Nero sits on the throne and Paul languishes in prison, and many years must pass before people begin calling their dogs Nero and their sons Paul, but that time comes! As God lives, that time will always come.

583. Whosoever exalteth himself. (v. 11)

A modern writer mentions somewhere that he once had a conversation with the manager of a large engineering shop in Liverpool, from which young men went out as engineers in ocean bound steamers. Often there were six or more of these, and they rose from post to post by examination and seniority. But the curious thing was that the place where they most frequently failed was at the top. So long as they were rising they were steady and earnest, but when they became chief they often fell into carelessness, or became the victims of intemperance. They had gained their ideal. They were resting on their laurels. They thought they had already "attained," when life was only half done.—*Mackay*

The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity

Matthew 22: 34-46

584. Which is the great commandment in the law? (v. 36)

The Pharisees made a distinction between great and little commandments in the law. They had hunted up 248 commandments, because, they said there are that many bones in the human body. Then they had 365 prohibitions, as many as the days of the year. But all these 613 commandments could not be equally important. Which was the most important, which was the great commandment in the law? That was a matter of discussion and argument among them.

585. Love divinely cultured in us. (v. 37)

There is not a daisy that was not organized to be a daisy, but I should like to see one that did not have the sun to help it up from the seed! There is not an aster that was not organized to be an aster, but where is there one that grew independent of the sun? What the sun is to flowers, that the Holy Ghost must be to our hearts, if we would be Christians.—*H. W. Beecher*

586. Love renders service easy. (v. 39)

If one were sent to take care of the poor, miserable, wounded soldiers lying in the plague-stricken hospitals on the plain of Solferino, he would say to himself, "Money would not hire me to do it, but I must do it because it is my duty. Here are men who are suffering and need attention, and I am bound to look after their wants." But let me find my own son among those unfortunate creatures, and, no matter how loathsome might be the offices to be performed toward him, could money buy from me the privilege of ministering to his necessities? Could any motive induce me to leave his side day or night? That which I should do in the one case through conscientiousness, or from a sense of duty, and which would be a disagreeable task, I should do in the other case through love, and it would then be a pleasure to me. I should do it with delight. There would not be hours enough in which I might serve in love my wounded son.—*H. W. Beecher*

587. As thyself. (v. 39)

He who carries self-regard far enough to keep himself in good health and high spirits, in the first place thereby becomes

an immediate source of happiness to those around, and in the second place maintains the ability to increase their happiness by altruistic actions. But one whose bodily vigor and mental health are undermined by self-sacrifice carried too far, in the first place becomes to those around a cause of depression, and in the second place renders himself incapable, or less capable, of actively furthering their welfare.—*Herbert Spencer*

588. The second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (v. 39)

Whoever walks a furlong without sympathy walks to his own funeral drest in his shroud.—*Walt Whitman*

589. The royal law. (v. 40)

The Christian finds what a right royal law this is of the Saviour's, for he sees that it includes and covers every possible form of duty; that if this command be fulfilled, it necessitates the fulfilling of every other command. He who is content with visiting the lower eminences which surround Mount Blanc may wander about from one to another, and get picturesque views in detail; but, at the best, they are only partial and imperfect glimpses. He alone who reaches the topmost summit can command at one glance all the glorious view. In like manner must it be with him who wishes to serve God. He may try in detail to keep this or that commandment, and he will be the better and happier for his efforts. But, in order to observe them all truly and in their spirit, he must stand on the moral eminence of love toward God. Then he will be able to perform his duty, not bit by bit, but as a whole, complete and perfect, doing everything for God, and yet not neglecting man.—*Hooper*

590. What think ye of Christ? (v. 42)

The Unitarians once had a piece of property in Boston where they had been using their own humanitarian methods to help people, and they had been doing it with unstinted generosity. But they discovered that their preaching did not lay hold of the people in that section. The mission was located in one of the poorer parts of Boston, where men and women were overcome by the coarsest sins. They went to the Methodists and said they were willing to let them take that property for a nominal rental and see what they could do with it. The Methodists took the work over. Today it has become the great Morgan Memorial Work in Boston. A very handsome action but a

recognition of the fact that the Gospel containing the higher view of Christ's person has a power over men that their gospel has not.—*Dean Brown*

591. What think ye of Christ? (v. 42)

The poet, Tennyson, was once asked by a friend, walking with him in his garden, what Jesus Christ meant to him. Tennyson stooped and picked a flower, and holding it in his hand, said: "What the sunlight is to that flower, Jesus Christ is to my soul."

592. What think ye of Christ? (v. 42)

I was riding in a railway carriage out from Benares. This city is known as the most sacred city of the Hindus. With me in the carriage was a Hindu gentleman of high caste. We, too, were alone in the carriage. Conversation on history, philosophy, literature, art, and religion took place. He asked finally what I thought of Benares. I answered more truthfully than wisely, that I thought it was, in the native quarter, the vilest city I had ever visited. His eyes flashed; his face flushed. He was a city official. He made some very disparaging remarks, and for the most part true, regarding New York. The sights, sounds, smells of Benares justified my severest criticisms. One needs no stronger argument for foreign missions than to go from the native quarter, with its filth, its sacred cows, its worship of monkeys in the Durga Temple, its fanatical pilgrims in the streets, and the burning of bodies on the banks of the Ganges, to the Christian quarter, with its clean streets, its quiet, and all the evidences of Christian civilization.

This gentleman told me that he was a graduate of Queen's College in Benares, that he studied in a Christian atmosphere, and that his whole attitude toward Christianity had been modified. But he showed me the yellow thread which proved that he had been initiated into the inner circles of Brahmanism. If he should remove those threads his wife and children would run away from him as if he were a leper. I dared, finally, to ask him this question: "Who is the ideal man of the race? Is it Brahma, assuming that there was such a man, Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, or Mohammed?" His eyes moistened and his lips quivered as he said, "The ideal man of the race is Jesus Christ." My emotions were tender as I said: "Jesus Christ is my Saviour. Would that He were your Saviour also." So I bade him goodbye at his station. This was his testimony to Christ.—*R. S. MacArthur*

593. Neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions. (v. 46)

'Twas time to hold their peace when they
Had ne'er another word to say:
Yet is their silence, unto Thee,
The full sound of Thy victory:
Their silence speaks aloud and is
Thy well pronounc'd panegyric . . .
To hold their peace is all the ways
These wretches have to speak Thy praise.—*Crashaw*

The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity

Matthew 9: 1-8

594. Sin and forgiveness. (v. 2)

Off the Scottish coast one Sunday, I officiated on the deck of a ship at the burial of one of the passengers, a Scotchman, who died that morning. It was a sad hour for us all. The body lay on the deck during the morning wrapped up in the British and American flags; and I was deputed by the captain to officiate at the solemn service, and later to tell the family of his death, when they should come to meet the ship at Greenock. At the setting of the sun I repeated the burial service: never before did these words have so much meaning, "the earth and the sea shall give up their dead." The body was lowered into its watery grave. The casket was weighted with iron and other heavy materials; but a few weeks afterward, while on the coast in the north of Scotland, I read in a newspaper how a body had been swept on the shore; and the description given clearly showed that it was the body of this man.

The sea had already given up its dead. Had we buried him in the depths of the Atlantic, the sea would not have given up its dead at that time. God buries our confessed sins in the middle of the mighty ocean of his forgiveness and forgetfulness.

595. Forgiveness of sin. (v. 2)

When the prophet wrote: "Thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea," he was thinking of the Mediterranean Sea, which has no tides. The dead and corrupt things which are thrown into the depths of this sea are never brought up again. The forgiven sins are done with as far as God is concerned.

596. Thy sins are forgiven. (v. 2)

There are many self-registering instruments which record what work they have done. So the human mind is a self-registering instrument, and it records all its past movements. In the judgment the leaf in your heart will be revealed in a flash. God grant that over it all may be written the words: "Thy sins are forgiven."

597. And, behold, they brought to him a man. (v. 2)

I have met some who have been atheists and have been brought back to God. The bright spots in my life are the days

in which I learned that I had been a help in bringing men back to God. I traveled from Washington to Kansas City some years ago to speak at a missionary conference. A few weeks afterwards I received a letter from a lawyer who said that he went to that conference an atheist, had been converted, and had since his conversion brought seventy into the church.

In Florida a man and his wife were in a meeting; the wife called soon afterward to tell my wife that her husband had been an atheist, that he became interested in what I said and in the night woke her up to say that he had been converted, declaring that he had been wrong all his life. There is more happiness in bringing souls back to God than in presidential nominations.—*William Jennings Bryan*

598. Thy sins be forgiven thee. (v. 2)

The German divine, Otto Funcke, relates that he saw two gravestones side by side in a cemetery. On the one was inscribed *Vergeben* (forgiven), on the other *Vergebens* (in vain). There was very little difference in the words, and yet a difference as great as from heaven to hell. Under the one stone lay a young woman. Her beauty was her misfortune. She fell and sank deep in sin, but was converted in prison, and found forgiveness with Jesus at the foot of the cross. "Who lay under the other stone," he says, "I do not know, and yet I know that his name is Legion; for many are they who in vain hear the gracious invitation." Thus is written in God's book about every one of us: "Vergeben" or "Vergebens." It matters not how many others say "Vergeben" if God says "Vergebens." It matters not if the bells ring out sadly and the organ sends forth funereal music and the minister speaks words of praise and the choir responds: "Asleep in Jesus," if God preaches the funeral sermon over you with the text: "Thou fool."

599. Conditions of forgiveness. (v. 2)

Lorenzo de Medici made confession to Savonarola, on his death bed, of three special sins, involving plunder done by him to Florence and its citizens. While he confessed, Savonarola consoled him by repeating, "God is merciful." When Lorenzo had finished, he demanded three things of him before absolution could be given. First, that he should have a living faith in God's mercy. Lorenzo replied that he had such a faith. Second, that he should restore what he had unjustly acquired. Lorenzo, after hesitating, consented. Then Savonarola drew himself up and said, "Give Florence back her liberties." Lorenzo

turned his face to the wall and uttered not a word, and Savonarola left the room without granting the absolution desired.

600. Sin-consciousness. (v. 5)

The Rev. James Guthrie, one of the Scottish Covenanters, had a man servant who was much humbled and perplexed by hearing his master pray regularly in family worship for one who was present that his sins might be forgiven. There were few, of course, in the household circle, and the man naturally thought that it was he who was prayed for. After Mr. Guthrie had one night been especially fervent in supplication for this person present, the man could bear it no longer and spoke to his master, wishing to know wherein he had come short. Judge of the astonishment of both when Mr. Guthrie said it was himself he had been praying for.

601. More to follow. (v. 5)

C. H. Spurgeon says: "There is a story of Rowland Hill, which I have no doubt is true, because it is so characteristic of the man's eccentricity and generosity. Someone or other had given him a hundred pounds to send to an extremely poor minister, but, thinking it was too much to send him all at once, he sent him five pounds in a letter, with simply these words inside the envelope, 'More to follow.' In a few days' time the good man had another letter by the post, and letters by the post were rarities in those days. When he opened it there was five pounds again, with just these words, 'And more to follow.' A day or two after there came another, and still the same words, 'And more to follow.' And so it continued twenty times, the good man being more and more astounded at these letters coming thus by post, with always the self-same message, 'And more to follow.' Now, every blessing that comes from God is sent in just such an envelope, with the same message, 'And more to follow.' 'I forgive you your sins, but there is more to follow.' 'I justify you in the righteousness of Christ, but there is more to follow.' 'I adopt you in My family, but there is more to follow.' 'I have helped you, even to old age, but there is more to follow.' "

The Twentieth Sunday after Trinity

Matthew 22: 1-14

602. The marriage feast. (v. 2)

A grand wedding in India is remarkable for many things, but no feature of it is more extraordinary than the universal hospitality by which it is attended. At the wedding of the Rao of Cutch, 34,000 people were fed on the first day, on the second 37,000 and on the third 36,000.

603. Making light of the gospel call. (v. 3)

A celebrated preacher of the seventeenth century, in a sermon to a crowded audience, described the terrors of the last judgment with such eloquence, pathos, and force of action, that some of his audience not only burst into tears, but sent forth piercing cries, as if the Judge Himself had been present and was about to pass upon them the final sentence. In the height of this commotion the preacher called upon them to dry their tears and cease their cries, as he was about to add something still more awful and astonishing than anything he had brought before them. Silence being obtained, he said with solemn voice and agitated countenance: "In one quarter of an hour from this time the emotions which you have just now exhibited will be stifled; the remembrance of the fearful truths which excited them will vanish; you will return to your carnal occupations, or sinful pleasures, with your usual avidity, and you will treat all you have heard 'as a tale that is told.' "

604. He sent forth other servants. (v. 4)

I have heard that in the deserts, when the caravans are in want of water they are accustomed to send on a camel, with its rider, in advance; then, another; then, another. As soon as the first man finds water, he shouts aloud, "Come!" The second repeats the cry, and the third, until the whole wilderness re-echoes with the word, "Come!"—*C. H. Spurgeon*

605. All things are ready; come to the marriage feast. (v. 4)

History tells of a banquet given by Henry VIII to the French Ambassadors. The best cooks in all the land were engaged. Servants went through all the country to gather the costliest viands, and when the day arrived the guests were kept hunting in the park so that their appetites might be keen, and then

at the right moment, to the sound of trumpets, they entered the hall and sat down to the table, decked with imperial plates, with the costliest wines, with gold candles and a hundred tapers as large as torches. But I have to tell you today of a more wonderful entertainment. The Lord Jesus Christ is the host; angels of God are the cup bearers; pardon and peace and life and heaven are the viands; palaces hung with gardens of eternal beauty are the banqueting place; the chalices of God are the plates; and I am one of His servants, and I come out with the invitation to all the people, a written invitation to every man, woman and child in all this audience.—*T. De W. Talmage*

606. They went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise. (v. 4)

According to a fable said to have come from Denmark, a spider once slid down a single filament of that web from the lofty rafters of a barn and established himself upon a lower level. There he spread his web, caught flies, grew sleek and prospered. One day, wandering about his premises, he saw the thread that stretched up into the unseen above him. "What is that for?" he said, and snapped it, and all his web collapsed.

A good deal of man's spiritual history is condensed into that fable. Unless we can keep our modern materialists from breaking connections with the Unseen above us, some more of man's spiritual history will prove the fable true.—*Fosdick*

607. As many as ye shall find bid to the marriage. (v. 9)

A Sunday school teacher once while making calls came to a home that was poverty stricken. He was told that the father had been ill a long time and the family had thereby become destitute. Now he had recovered and was again in a position to support his family. The visitor then asked if they attended church. "No," said the father, "no one has invited us." "Then I invite you now," answered the visitor; "come to the church I attend." On the following Sunday a number of the children were in Sunday school, and they told their teacher that the entire family had attended church that day. From that time on they were regular hearers of the Word.

608. Another parable of the wedding garment. (v. 11)

It is curious to find that the Jews have a parable very similar to that spoken by our Lord, though the comparison of them brings out, in a very forcible way, the infinite superiority of our Lord's teachings.

"Repent one day before death. There was a king who bade

all his servants to a great repast, but did not indicate the hour. Some went home, and put on their best garments, and stood at the door of the palace. Others said, 'There is ample time; the king will let us know beforehand.' But the king summoned them suddenly, and those who came in their best garments were well received; but the foolish ones, who came in their slovenliness, were turned away in disgrace. Therefore repent today, lest tomorrow you may be summoned."

609. The indispensable garment. (v. 11)

Some officers in Her Majesty's service were invited to attend the marriage of an Eastern magnate. They went in full dress uniform; but the servant at the door said, "You cannot enter, gentlemen, without you have on the wedding garment." "Oh, yes; we can go anywhere in this uniform," rejoined the officers; "we can even go to Her Majesty's receptions in it." "I can't help that," was the servant's answer; "you must put on the wedding garment, or you cannot enter." He reached up to some robes hanging on the wall, and gave them one each which they at once put on, and then entered. This incident vividly explains the seeming injustice of the host at the feast in the parable. Wedding garments were provided free of cost to those who entered, and for visitors not to avail themselves of the provision made for them was to commit a breach of courtesy, and slight and insult of the host. So is it the Righteousness of Christ. There is no entering heaven without it, whatever uniform we may wear. But, thank God, it is provided for every willing sinner, entirely free of cost.

610. Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? (v. 12)

The well known English missionary, Reader Harris, relates the following about himself. "When I was in South America I lived with a tribe of savages called Paran-Tin-Tins. They were cannibals but treated me in a friendly manner. They were sun worshipers but very interesting people. After my return to England Queen Victoria summoned me to appear before her and relate about the Paran-Tin-Tins. I was in a great dilemma not knowing how I should dress. A few days before the day set for the audience I went to the Secretary of State and said to him: 'I have orders to appear before Her Majesty and I do not know what clothes to wear. In fact, I have none but these that I have on, and in a very few days I must appear before the Queen.' He replied: 'Go just as you are and you will receive a court costume.' I went to the Queen and she sent me a court

costume. I have it yet. It was given me as a present because I had taken an oath never to undertake anything contrary to the wishes of Her Majesty, the Queen." So must we come to the King of kings, just as we are, and He will give us the court costume in which we can appear before Him, after we have surrendered to Him our lives.

611. Speechless at the judgment. (v. 12)

There is no speechlessness now when we ask men if they are prepared for eternity; all have an excuse or an empty promise. We have read of some who have recovered from apparent death by drowning and they say that when life went away, every action, every occurrence in life presented itself vividly; they seemed to live their whole life over; with marvelous accuracy long forgotten things passed before them and the pictures printed themselves on the mental retina. If there is to come at last this resuscitation of memory, oh, we cannot wonder at the speechlessness of those who are condemned at the judgment.

612. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (v. 13)

At a distinguished gathering, to which also a clergyman was invited, the conversation turned upon the subject of heaven and hell. One of the guests denied that there was such a place as hell, whereupon the clergyman cited this passage about "weeping and gnashing of teeth." The man then replied that as far as he was concerned the good Lord would not have that pleasure, for before he died he would have all his teeth extracted.

When the company had departed and this man had arrived at his home, in inconceivable folly he ordered his coachman to harness the horses and drive him to the nearest dentist to have his teeth pulled without delay. When the coachman stopped at the given address and requested his employer to leave the conveyance he found to his great astonishment that his employer was dead.

613. The recompense of beneficence.

The sister of the king of Sweden sold her jewels and founded a hospital. One day a patient's tears of gratitude fell on the hand of the princess. She looked at the tears and said, "Oh, now I have my jewels back again."

The Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity

John 4: 46-54

614. Benefit of sickness. (v. 46)

Thou art called on earth an evil: ah! how often art thou a good, a healing balsam, under whose benign influence the soul rests after its wild struggles and its storms are still! More than once hast thou prevented suicide, and preserved from madness. The terrible, the bitter words which destroy the heart are by degrees obliterated during the feverish dreams of illness: The terrors which lately seemed so near us are drawn away into the distance; we forget,—God be thanked!—we forget; and when, at last, we arise with exhausted strength from the sickbed, our souls often awake as out of a long night into a new morning. So many things, during the illness of the body, conspire to soften the feelings,—the still room, the mild twilight through the window-curtains, the low voices, and then, more than all, the kind words of those who surround us,—their attention, their solicitude, perhaps a tear in their eyes,—all this does us good, does us essential good.—*Fredrika Bremer*

615. Hindrances are sometimes a help. (v. 48)

The vessel which Nansen had constructed for his last voyage was bowl-hapsed, so that, when subjected to the tremendous pressure of the Arctic ice, she might rise in resistance instead of being crushed as so many ships have been. The *Fram* justified expectations. In ice thirty feet thick she rose till her keel rested almost on the surface. The powers that seem to crush us are the powers that, if we use them rightly, will lift us to higher levels of life.

616. Death. (v. 49)

I was reading the other day of a child, whose little sister was just laid in her coffin, and some friend, not knowing this, came in and inquired where she was. "She is asleep," answered the child, "in her new cradle."—*Dr. Neale*

617. Prayers of a father. (v. 49)

Philip James Spener had a son of eminent talents, but perverse and extremely vicious. All means of love and persuasion were without success. The father could only pray, which he continued to do, that the Lord might be pleased to save his son

at any time and in any way. The son fell sick; and while lying on his bed in great distress of mind, nearly past the power of speech or motion, he suddenly started up, clasped his hands, and exclaimed: "My father's prayers, like mountains, surround me!" Soon after his anxiety ceased, a sweet peace spread over his face, his malady came to a crisis, and the son was saved in body and soul. He became another man. Spener lived to see his son a respectable man, in public office and happily married. Such was the change of his life after his conversion. — *N. E. Puritan*

618. Directness in prayer. (v. 49)

A Scotchman's wife besought him to pray that the life of their dying baby might be spared. True to his old instincts, the good man kneeled down devoutly, and went out on the well worn track, as he was wont to do in the prayer meetings at the kirk. Through and through the routine petitions he wandered along helplessly, until he reached at last the honored quotation: "Lord, remember Thine ancient people, and turn again the captivity of Zion!" A mother's heart could hold its patience no longer. "Eh, man!" the woman broke forth impetuously; "you are aye drawn out for the Jews, but it's our bairn that's a-deein'." Then, clasping her hands, she cried: "Oh, help us, Lord, and give our darling back to us if it be Thy holy will; but if he is to be taken away from us, make us know Thou wilt have him to Thyself!" That wife knew what it was to pray a real prayer; and to the throne of grace she went, asking directly what she wanted most.—*James Hamilton*

619. Death. (v. 49)

A man's journey is not unto the grave. Dying is transmutation. Dying is not folding of the wings; but pluming the pinions for new and larger flight. Dying is not striking an unseen rock, but a speedy entrance into an open harbor. Death is no enemy, letting the arrow fly toward one who sits at life's banquet table. Death is a friend coming on an errand of release and divine convoy. For God's children "to be death-called is to be God-called; to be God-called is to be Christ-found; to be Christ-found is hope and home and heaven."

620. Death. (v. 49)

There is a striking picture in Berlin entitled "What is your life?" It paints before you Death, leading behind him his train of Life's captives. The young and old are there; the new born child and the old man. The rich and poor are there;

kings and queens in royal robe, and the beggar in his gaberdine. But the most striking thing in the picture is two figures in the foreground on either side of the grim skeleton. One of these is an old man with a sorrow-furrowed face and weary eyes. He is kneeling before Death in suppliant attitude, with clasped hands, pleading with him evidently to take him a captive. Life has no more charms for him.

But Death will have none of him. He has his grasp on a better prey. Turning away from the old man, he is clutching with his bony fingers a sweet young girl. She is dressed as a bride, and her brokenhearted husband is struggling fiercely to get her out of the clutch of Death. But all in vain; Death will not be denied. As you look at it you are reminded of the words: "What is your life? A vapour that appeareth for a little time."

621. Death. (v. 49)

There is a beautiful legend which tells of a saint of the olden time, who dreamed that death came to him as he lay on his couch. When first he saw the visitor he struck terror to his soul, for he came in the dark garb of a monk; in his hand the scythe was held, and beneath the cowl a skeleton grinned. But, as he looked longer, behold! the dark habiliments began to melt away in glowing light; the scythe was transformed into a palm of victory; the skeleton vanished into air, and in its place stood a beautiful angel, robed in resplendent glory and smiling with joy, as he said to the saint, "Oh, child of God! I am Death. You see me in your human fears as a dark and terrible foe, but in reality I am thy friend, and I come as God's messenger to lead thee home."

622. Need of early preparation for death. (v. 49)

A young prince asked his tutor to give him some instruction about preparing for death. "Plenty of time for that when you are older," was the reply. "No," said the child, "I have been to the churchyard, and measured the graves, *and there are many shorter than I am.*"

The Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity

Matthew 18: 23-35

623. The sinner's debt. (v. 25)

This "servant," or "minister," must have have been some high functionary of state, who manipulated the revenues of provinces. He represents the sinner, every sinner. The debt for which every sinner is accountable, or liable, to God is enormous. It is not easy to determine exactly what was the value of the Hebrew talent. It contained 3,000 shekels of the sanctuary, and is supposed by some to have corresponded exactly to the Greek Aeginetan talent, which exceeded the common Attic commercial talent. This common Attic talent is estimated by Boeckh as equivalent to 1,375 German thalers. Taking the German thaler as equivalent to 3s sterling, a single Attic talent would amount to a little above 200 pounds; so then ten thousand talents would be something more than 2,000,000 pounds sterling, an immense sum, more especially in those ancient times, when the relation of bullion to commodities was such that the prices of commodities in bullion were far smaller relatively than now, with our vast importations of gold from America and Australia. This immense sum, almost baffling ordinary conception, represents the sinner's spiritual debt or guilt.—*J. Morison*

624. Deliverance. (v. 27)

Henry Clay, at one time of his life, was burdened with a debt of $10,000, which he owed a bank in Kentucky. Certain political friends raised a sufficient sum of money and quietly paid off the deft.

In ignorance of the fact Mr. Clay went to the bank and said to the cashier, "I have called to see you in reference to that debt of mine to the bank." "You don't owe us anything," replied the cashier. "Why, how am I to understand you?" "Well, a number of your friends have contributed and paid off the debt; you do not owe this bank a dollar." Tears rushed into Mr. Clay's eyes and being unable to speak he walked away.

Mr. Clay felt the joy of a great deliverance, deliverance from a galling debt. And deliverance is the keynote in the "new song" of all the blood-bought millions on earth and in heaven.

625. Forgiveness. (v. 27)

Man is freed from an unforgiving temper by the gentle influences of Divine Love, not by self determination. A traveler in Burma, after fording a certain river, found his body covered with small leeches, busily sucking his blood. His first impulse was to tear the tormentors from his flesh; but his servant warned him that by doing it he would expose his life to danger. They must not be torn off, he said, lest portions remain in the wounds and become a poison. They must drop off spontaneously and so will be harmless. The native prepared a bath for his master, by the decoction of some herbs and directed him to lie down in it. As soon as he had bathed in the balsam the leeches dropped off.

Each unforgiven injury rankling in the heart is like a leech sucking the life blood. Mere human determination to have done with it will not cast the evil thing away. You must bathe your whole being in God's pardoning mercy; and these venomous creatures will instantly let go their hold.

626. God's pardon. (v. 27)

History tells us that a former Emperor of China on great occasions would pardon a number of criminals who had been sentenced to death. When the long list of names written on a parchment were brought into his imperial presence, he would take his brush, close his eyes and make a haphazard circle. Those within the circle were set free and those on the outside were executed. But no such grading methods will be used by the eternal God. The adjustment of reward and punishment under the eye of God will be deliberate and exact.

627. And forgave him the debt. (v. 27)

When the Russian General, Prince Gallitzin, had captured the almost impregnable fortress Schlüsselberg, the Czar, Peter the Great, said to him: "Demand anything you desire, only Moscow and my Catherine excepted." With wonderful magnanimity Gallitzin asked that his old enemy and adversary, Prince Repnin, whom Peter had demoted from the position of Marshal to that of an ordinary soldier, might be pardoned. His request was granted and with it he received the confidence of his monarch, the esteem of Repnin, and the admiration of all who heard of his magnanimity.

628. Christ forgiving. (v. 27)

Lowell has a beautiful little poem called "Yussouf." To the tent of Yussouf, the Good, the Arab chieftain, a stranger

comes one night in hot haste, fleeing for his life from his enemies. And Yussouf shelters him, and in the morning gives him his own fastest horse and a bag of gold. But "nobleness enkindleth nobleness," and the stranger bends low at Yussouf's feet and makes his confession: "All this thou hast done unto that Ibrahim that slew thy son." And Yussouf bids him take three times the gold, and forgives him freely.

We had slighted Christ. We had smitten Him. We had slain Him by our sins on the Cross on Calvary. There is no reason why He should love us, but every reason why He should visit us with His righteous displeasure. But He offered us His fine gold of pardon and peace and purity, and we received it wonderingly, thankfully, at His hands.

629. Pay me that thou owest. (v. 28)

A man whose name was Samuel Holmes was incarcerated in prison for murder. One day he received a visit from an old schoolmate, Lucian Young. The latter had become known in wide circles because of a heroic deed by which he had saved a human life. He turned to Governor Blackburn hoping to bring about a pardon for his friend and his request was cheerfully granted on account of his heroism. The governor signed the pardon. With the paper in his pocket Young hurried to his friend in prison. But before acquainting his friend with the good news he asked him among other things what he would do if he were pardoned. "What would I do?" was the immediate reply. "I would go to Lancaster to Judge Owaley and cause the apprehension of the man who has placed me here."

Sad at heart, without another word, Young departed. Once outside the prison he tore the pardon to pieces. If Holmes himself would not forgive, no pardon would be given him.

630. Forgiveness. (v. 33)

Forgiveness is cheaper than revenge, and is sweeter and more valuable. Prudence, as well as piety, counsels quiet to men under reproof or reproach. If a bee stings you, will you go to the hive and destroy it? Would not a thousand come upon you? If you receive a trifling injury, don't be anxious to avenge it. Let it drop. It is wisdom to say little respecting the injuries you have received. When enemies see they have hit you they know where to strike next time, while if you show no signs of disquiet, they think their stroke must have missed its mark. Lie quiet and you will be likely to be let alone.—*H. L. Hastings*

631. Forgiveness of enemies. (v. 33)

This was one of the Master's specialities. Of course, many had thought of it before Him. It flames up radiantly in many lands and many religions, but none ever took it as He did and put it in the forefront, making it the very touchstone and standard of right living that a man should love his enemies and do good unto them. Of all the ideals that seem too impractical ever to be influential, is there another ideal like that? The Graeco-Roman world into which the Gospel went did not have that ideal. Cicero was one of the noblest Romans of them all and he had an enemy called Clodins. Clodins fell at the battle of Bovillae. That was one of the happiest days in Cicero's life. He was so unabashed in his joy that he started dating letters from the day on which his enemy fell. We have one of these letters yet with this date upon it: "560 days after Bovillae." No one of us stands out above the moral average of our time as Cicero did above his, but no one of us could do that without being ashamed of ourselves. Something has happened to the ethical ideals of the race.

632. Animosity

A boy in Sparta having stolen a fox kept him under his coat, and though the fox was gnawing his vitals, he submitted to it rather than expose his misdeed. Many a man with a smiling countenance has under his jacket an animosity that is gnawing away strength of body and integrity of soul. Better get rid of that fox as soon as possible.

The Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity

Matthew 22: 15-22

633. Tribute unto Caesar. (v. 17)

"Cæsar" was originally the cognomen of a patrician Roman family, but when that family became extinct at the death of Nero, "Cæsar" was made the official title of the emperors who succeeded him. A survival of the word is seen in the German "Kaiser" and the Russian "Czar." The Roman monarch ruling at the time of the crucifixion was Tiberius Cæsar, who reigned from 14 to 37 A. D.

634. Tribute. (v. 17)

The word "tribute" here refers to the annual poll tax levied upon the Jews by the Roman government. It was collected by the publicans and was payable in the *denarius,* or New Testament "penny." Because this coin bore the image of the Emperor, the tax was most offensive to the Jews, as it was a perpetual reminder of their subjection.

635. Conscience exempt from civil rule. (v. 17)

When certain persons attempted to persuade Stephen, King of Poland, to force some of his subjects who were of a different religion to embrace his, he said to them: "I am king of men and not of consciences. The dominion of conscience belongs exclusively to God."

636. His conscience not for sale. (v. 19)

When the liquor men began casting about for a man to contest constitutional prohibition in the courts, they decided to look for someone of social prominence.

They laid down on a table in front of Mr. Charles Evans Hughes a cheque for $750,000. The great jurist replied: "I would not champion this cause before the courts for any sum of money you could name."

Failing to buy Mr. Hughes, they went to ex-President William Howard Taft, and placed before him a signed cheque, telling him to fill it in for any amount he wanted. The reply of this statesman will be memorable:

"Gentlemen, you couldn't pile enough gold on this continent to induce me to take your case before the courts and before the public, for I will have you to know that my conscience is not for sale."

637. Martin Luther's conscience. (v. 19)

Martin Luther, the giant of the Middle Ages, rather than go contrary to his conscience and do an act unworthy of a man, exclaimed in tones of thunder that echoed around the world: "If I had a thousand heads I would lose them all rather than recant."—*George H. Knox*

638. The things that are Caesar's. (v. 21)

Jesus was here teaching a lesson in common honesty. Since the Jews were enjoying the protection and privileges of the Roman government, they were under obligation to pay something in return for those services. The payment of the tax was not necessarily an endorsement of the moral character of the government, but was an acknowledgment of the authority of the power that protected them.

639. Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. (v. 21)

Have you heard the story about the intense loyalty of a Russian peasant? When the French were invading Russia at the beginning of the last century, they arrived at a small village. All the inhabitants had fled save one peasant, a woodman by occupation judging from the axe in his belt. The officer in charge of the French troops ordered the man to be shot. The soldiers raised their muskets and prepared to fire, but the woodman coolly looked down the barrels of their guns and never flinched. The officer was so struck with the man's courage that he commanded the firing party to lower their muskets and spare the prisoner's life. "But," said he, "we will put a mark upon him." They made a branding iron red hot and placed it on his hand. When they removed it something was left there. "What is that?" asked the woodman. "That," said the officer, "is an 'N' for Napoleon. You belong to him now." The man turned, placed the branded hand on a solid place, took his axe from his belt, and with one stroke severed his hand from his arm. "There now," he cried out, "there is not one bit of me that does not belong to the Czar." That man was truly loyal. He loved his country, and he would rather lose his hand than be branded a traitor.

640. The citizen's twofold stewardship. (v. 21)

Christ is not here defining two duties which stand in contrast or antithesis to each other. He is defining one duty, in its just relation to another and a higher duty out of which it grows. Recall the occasion of His words. Someone has brought Him a penny, and asks Him whether it is lawful for a Jew to pay tribute to a Roman ruler. Says Christ in effect, "My brother, the penny itself has settled that question. It has stamped upon it an image or medallion which is Cæsar's likeness. It is current here because this is Cæsar's country; and you use it, whether you choose to own the fact or no, because you are Cæsar's subject. Give Cæsar, therefore, his due. Pay your taxes; obey the laws; honor the civil authorities; but that you may do so, begin by paying your taxes to God. The penny bears an image; so do you. The penny is from the mint of the emperor; you are from the mint of God. The use of the penny is determined by its likeness. So, too, your use is determined by your likeness. Every faculty in you, every gift, every grace and charm and power which is most characteristic and distinctive, is the stamp of the Divine. You are God's child. You bear His image. Render to Him your supreme and unceasing tribute; and in doing that, all other and minor questions will settle themselves. 'Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's,' do I say? Yes. But render them because, and in the inspiration, of that higher duty which bids you render unto God the things that are God's!"—*Bishop H. C. Potter*

641. Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. (v. 21)

A striking instance of obedience to the sovereign, and faithfulness to God, occurred during the persecution of Galerius. A whole city was converted to Christianity, and as it was situated in a mountainous country, and the difficulty of obtaining provisions would be great on the part of those who besieged the place, it was feared that if the Christians resisted, the town could not be taken. A herald advanced to the gates of the city to demand admission in the name of the emperor. Immediately a person appeared upon the walls, and proclaimed aloud that though the Christians of that place would rather forfeit their lives than take part in any idolatrous service, yet as their religion taught them to obey their temporal prince, they would open their gates to the troops of the emperor. No sooner was this done than the soldiers rushed in. The streets and houses were found deserted, and all the people had assembled in the

principal church of the city. The royal deputy entered it, and called upon the governor and chief citizens to take part according to the emperor's orders, in a heathen sacrifice. "You have opened your gates to the emperor's summons; now open your hearts to his command." "Here," said the chief man of the place, "we cannot obey him. To Cæsar we have rendered what are Cæsar's: we must give what is God's to God." The whole assembly in whose hearing the words were uttered repeated with one voice, "Amen." The fervor and unity of the people only increased the anger of the deputy. "You must take the consequences," he said. Then rushing out of the church, and causing the doors to be secured, he set fire to the place, and destroyed all the people.

The Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity

Matthew 9: 18-26

642. Touched the hem of His garment. (v. 20)

The poet Longfellow was once standing on the wild, rocky shore of Massachusetts. It was gathering night, and as he looked out on the foam-crested waves he saw far off in the sea a lighthouse on an angry reef. Already it was casting forth its beams upon the waters, warning the mariners as they passed of the dangers, and pointing to the distant harbor in the bay beyond. To the poet it seemed a modern setting of the old story of the Christian giant, and he sat down and wrote the lines:

"Like the great giant Christopher it stands
Upon the brink of the tempestuous wave;
Wading far out among the rocks and sands,
The night o'ertaken mariner to save."

A beautiful picture! May you and I be human lighthouses, casting the beams of a Saviour's love on the lost on life's sea, and pointing them to the harbor of eternal safety. To do that is to "touch" Christ.

643. Tradition concerning the woman who touched Christ's garment. (v. 20)

A curious tradition is preserved by Eusebius connecting the city of Cæsarea Philippi with the woman of faith, who was cured of her inveterate disease by touching the border of Jesus' garment. The words of the early historian are: "But as we have mentioned this city, I do not think it right to pass by a narrative that deserves to be recorded for posterity. They say, that the woman who had an issue of blood, mentioned by the Evangelists, and who obtained deliverance from her affliction by our Saviour, was a native of this place, and that her house is shown in the city, and the wonderful monuments of our Saviour's benefit to her are still remaining. At the gates of her house, on an elevated stone, stands a brazen image of a woman on her bended knees, with her hands stretched out before her, like one retreating. Oposite to this there is another image of a man erect, of the same materials, decently clad in a mantle, and stretching out his hand to the woman. Before her feet, and on the same pedestal, there is a certain strange plant growing,

which, rising as high as the hem of the brazen garment, is a kind of antidote to all kinds of diseases. This figure, they say, is a statue of Jesus Christ, and it has remained even until our times, so that we ourselves saw it whilst tarrying in that city."

644. The Touch. (v. 21)

"Who was it touched me?" Close on every side
They press in nervous haste to hear, to see.
A hush goes through the ranks, the cries subside;
Calmly the Master's voice, "Who was it touched me?"

"Who was it touched me?" Curious to know
They stand o'erawed, perplexed at what was heard,
Until a woman, hesitant and slow,
Falls at His feet,—" 'Twas I," her prayerful word.

But not the carnal touch of those that pressed
About the Master in the tumult there.
Ah no! The hopeful touch of one distressed,
Who sought and found an answer to her prayer.

O let me touch, if but Thy garment's hem,
Lord, let me touch, that I may be made whole!
Thou hadst the healing power that quickened them,
Oh! for the saving balsam for my soul!—*Victor E. Beck.*

645. Daughter, be of good comfort. (v. 22)

A minister had sealed a letter to a friend, when he bethought himself that he had forgotten to add a cheerful message, and so he wrote on the outside of the envelope, "Be of good cheer, brother."

When the man received the letter, he found that the post office authorities had stamped against the words of cheer this intimation: "Contrary to regulations."

Many Christians read this word of the Master as if it were, "Be of good cheer, brother,—contrary to regulations!"

The Christian may be of good cheer even on board of a ship drifting before the fury of the storm, for he is in the keeping of Him who holds the winds and seas in His hand.

646. Use of bereavement. (v. 23)

"See, father!" said a lad who was walking with his father, "they are knocking away the props from under the bridge: what are they doing that for? Won't the bridge fall?" "They are knocking them away," said the father, "that the timbers may rest more firmly upon the stone piers, which are now finished." God only takes away our earthly props, that we may rest more firmly upon Him.

647. Comfort in bereavement. (v. 23)

A lovely young lady, in her near approach to death, observing her father overcome with grief, thus remonstrated with him: "Why, sir, so much grief? Had an offer of marriage been made me by one who in himself was all you could wish, and whose situation in life was far superior to mine, but whose residence must be in a remote part of the kingdom, perhaps, the consideration of advancement and promotion to me would have reconciled you to my removal, though it would have been little other than a separation for life. But I am now about to be promoted incomparably beyond anything that could have occurred in this world. Then why this reluctance? Our next meeting will be in circumstances of high improvement, joyful and perpetual."

648. Bearing bereavement. (v. 23)

A lady one day, in her husband's absence from home, lost both her children by cholera; but she laid them out with a mother's tenderness, and spread a sheet over them, and waited at the door for her husband's return. "A Person lent me some jewels," she said when she met him; "and now He wishes to receive them again. What shall I do?" "Return them, by all means," said her husband. Then she led the way, and silently uncovered to him the forms of his dear children.

649. And they laughed him to scorn. (v. 24)

As Pericles was sitting before others in a meeting, a foul-mouthed fellow railed upon him all the day long; at night when it was dark, and the meeting broke up, the fellow followed him, and railed at him, even to his door, and he took no notice of him or what he said; but, when he came home, this is all he said to him, "It is dark: I pray, let my man light you home." —*Jeremiah Burroughs*

650. Asleep, not dead

At the funeral of Dr. A. J. Gordon, in Boston, Dr. A. T. Pierson said that the telegram announcing his death came at three o'clock in the morning, and being unable to sleep, he read the New Testament through from Matthew to Revelation to see what it said about death. And he noticed that after the resurrection of Jesus the apostles seldom used the word death to express the close of a Christian's life; but "sleep," "at home in the Lord," or "depart, loose the moorings," as of a vessel

about to set out on the sea. What a comfort to the Christians to think of the loved ones as being "asleep in Christ," instead of having ceased to be.—*Harry H. Crawford*

651. Death, a sleep. (v. 24)

At the battle of Gaines' Mills, two brothers were wounded nearly at the same time. They were found by a friend, embraced in each other's arms, talking of home, mother, and their love of country. They prayed for each other, for absent friends, and especially for mother. Soon the younger died. The elder, blind from a wound in the face, knew it not, and continued to speak encouraging words to him. Hearing no reply, he said in a pleased way, "Poor little Rob's asleep." It was his last sleep; and in a few minutes more they joined company in that land where the sound of battle will never disturb.

652. The maid is not dead, but sleepeth. (v. 24)

This text is associated with the family history of Bishop Harold Browne. When he had tidings in 1879 of the death of his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Barrington Browne, he wrote:

"It was very remarkable that about two hours after her death we were reading in our chapel service in the lesson for the day, 'The damsel is not dead, but *sleepeth*,' and next morning we received the telegram, 'Helen fell asleep last evening.' A similar coincidence happened to me twenty-two years ago, when my eldest daughter died at the age of sixteen. I had to read next morning in our family prayers, 'Weep not, she is not dead, but sleepeth.' The words are engraved on her coped coffin-tomb in Trumpington Churchyard."—*Dean Kitchin*

The Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity

Matthew 24: 15-28

653. Destruction of Jerusalem

The destruction of Jerusalem, in A. D. 70, by Titus, the Roman general, was one of unparalleled horrors. During the siege which lasted one hundred and forty-three days, the inhabitants suffered indescribably from famine and thirst. Indeed, few tragedies in the world's history have been more terrible. More than a million Jews were slaughtered, and thousands were sold into slavery. The Temple which had been completed but five years before, was despoiled of its treasures and completely destroyed. Representatives of some of its sacred furnishings,—the ark, tables and seven-branched candlesticks,—may still be seen on the arch erected in Rome in honor of Titus.

654. For as the lightning cometh out of the east. (v. 27)

A Scottish minister gave the following reminiscence of his preaching at Perth. "His text was taken from the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, regarding the coming of the Son of Man. I remember nothing of the sermon, save its general subject; but one thing I can never forget. While he was engaged in unfolding his subject, from out of a dark cloud which obscured the church there came forth a bright blaze of lightning and a crash of thunder. There was deep stillness in the audience. The preacher paused; and from the stillness and the gloom, his powerful voice, clothed with increased solemnity, pronounced these words: *For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.* You can imagine the effect."

655. As lightning cometh out of the east. (v. 27)

Archbishop Sancroft, one of the Seven Bishops of the reign of James II, died at the age of seventy-seven in his native village of Fresingfield in Suffolk. Over his head, by his own command, were inscribed the words of St. Matthew 24: 27: "As lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be."

656. The sanitary order of human life. (v. 28)

You know how in eastern lands, if any beast of burden falls and dies, though the moment before the whole horizon may have been clear, with not a bird in sight, a stream of vultures

suddenly appears to wrangle over the unexpected feast. You know how on any tropical ocean, if a carcass be thrown overboard, though at the moment there may not be a speck in the sky, the albatross and other birds of mighty wing appear as if by magic, and scold and fight over the welcome repast. Our Lord then applies this familiar image of the carcass and the birds of prey to the judicial and retributive forces of human history, and intends to illustrate some law or principle by which they are governed.—*S. Cox*

657. The need for scavengers. (v. 28)

That the vultures gather wheresoever the carcass is, and gather to consume it, is clearly for the health of the world; for, unconsumed, the carcass would but rot and fester, and infect the air; by its infection turning the very breath of life into a minister of death. All the birds that prey on carrion are scavenger birds. Most of the scavengers, from the vulture of the east down to the flies which cleanse our shops and rooms from every morsel of corruption are a little loathsome to us; yet how much we owe them! We owe them nothing short of health and life. A world without scavengers would soon become a stinking sepulchre.—*S. Cox*

658. Speedy destruction of carcasses. (v. 28)

On the highway, the ass, mule, or camel, which has fallen under its burden, and is no longer able to rise, is unloaded by its master, its saddle, halter, and even its shoes are taken off, and it is scarcely dead, when its skin, too, is hastily removed to be sold to a tanner; the carcass is left where it fell; and as the traveler passes by upon the narrow road his horse is frightened, not more by the repulsive scent and sight, than by the eagles, vultures, ravens, crows, and magpies, that take wing on his approach, or continue to dispute the prey with hungry dogs. When night comes on, however, the winged devourers withdraw, and give place to sneaking jackals and foxes, and to the hyenas and wolves, which now warily quit their lairs, and hasten to secure a share of the feast.—*Van Lennep*

The Twenty-sixth Sunday after Trinity

Matthew 25: 31-46

659. The judgment. (v. 32)

It is a solemn time in a courtroom when there is an important case on hand, and the judge of the Supreme Court enters and sits down and with gavel strikes on the desk commanding bar and jury and witnesses and audience into silence. All voices are hushed, all heads are uncovered. But how much more impressive when Christ shall take the judgment seat on the last day of the last week of the last month of the last year of the world's existence, and with gavel of thunderbolt shall smite the mountains, commanding all the land and all the sea into silence. —*Talmage*

660. He shall separate them one from another. (v. 32)

There is a machine in the Bank of England which receives sovereigns, as a mill receives grain, for the purpose of determining wholesale whether they are of full weight. As they pass through, the machinery by unerring laws throws all that are light to one side, and all that are of full weight to another. That process is a silent but solemn parable. Founded as it is upon the laws of nature, it affords the most vivid similitude of the certainty which characterizes the judgment of the Great Day. There are no mistakes or partialities to which the light may trust; the only hope lies in being of standard weight before they go in.—*Arnot*

661. The day of judgment. (v. 32)

The 19th of May, 1788, was remarkably dark in Connecticut. Candles were lighted in many houses; the birds were silent and disappeared; the domestic fowls retired to roost. The people were impressed with the idea that the day of judgment was at hand. This opinion was entertained by the legislature, at that time sitting at Hartford. The house of representatives adjourned; the council proposed to follow the example. Colonel Davenport objected. "The day of judgment," he said, "is either approaching or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for an adjournment; if it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I wish, therefore, that candles may be brought."

662. Photographing the heart. (v. 32)

Mr. Moody used to say, that if a photographer came into the country who could photograph people's hearts he would starve to death before he could get a customer. You would not want a photograph of your heart taken, pure man, or woman, as you are. But in judgment every secret thing shall be revealed.

663. Judgment to come. (v. 32)

However we may escape our just deserts in life, retribution is bound to overtake him who does not repent of sin. Judge Gray, of the United States Supreme Court, was once holding court in Indiana when a man was brought before him who was clearly guilty, but he was very shrewd and had managed to keep within the letter of the law while doing a grievous wrong. "I wish I could punish you severely," said the Judge, "but through a technicality of the law I must discharge you. But I know you are guilty and so do you. Do not congratulate yourself. You will one day come before a Judge infinitely greater and wiser than I and He will deal with you according to justice, which is higher than law."

664. The end of all charity. (v. 35)

I give food to a hungry person, or drink to one who is thirsty, or clothe him that is naked, not only that he may eat and drink, but that I may get in touch with him and bring him to Christ.—*Luther*

665. Feed the hungry and give the thirsty to drink. (v. 35)

Once a poor wayfaring boy went roving through the streets of Eisenach. He sang before a door for bread: a benevolent hand gave it to him, and received him into the household; and that boy never forgot the impression made by this benefactress and her Christian family with their love for the poor. Today every child knows what the Cotta family did for the miner's son, Martin Luther.

666. Shelter the homeless. (v. 35)

In Bonn, Germany, a learned man once sat at his study table; but he thought there, not only of his students, but also of another class of wanderers. Where are homes to be found for young journeymen mechanics amid their restless life and the temptations of their career? He wrote a pamphlet on the condition of their lodgings, which exerts an influence to this day throughout all Germany. Even though not one of the wandering artisans should ever discover that this learned man's name was Professor Clemens Perthes, or that he was the father of their

lodging system, many a one must, nevertheless, have silently blessed the unknown hand that laid the foundation of such homes for them.

667. Naked and ye clothed me. (v. 36)

A soldier was placed on duty one bitter cold night, between one sentry box and another. A poor working man chanced to pass along, as he was walking his beat, and, moved with pity for the poor fellow, took off his coat, and gave it to the soldier to keep him warm, adding that he should very soon reach home, while the soldier would be exposed to the cold all night. The cold was so intense the soldier was found frozen at his post. Some time after, the man lay on his death bed, and, in a dream, he imagined he saw an angel appear to him. "You have got my coat on," said the man. "Yes, this is the coat you lent me that cold, bitter night, when I was on duty and you passed by. 'I was naked and ye clothed me.'"

So Christ took off the cloak of His glory, and endured all manner of persecution, suffered shame, that He might clothe us with His cloak of righteousness, and win us back to God. Though He died in the attempt, yet He succeeded, and again took up His own glory.

668. Sick and ye visited me. (v. 36)

I have a friend, a minister, who hears the wishes of Jesus Christ. He is in His secrets. He was going one weekday afternoon to preach in a certain village, and was visiting from house to house before the service. He went into one house where he found an old man sitting over a fire in very great trouble. "How is it," my friend said, "that you are so unhappy?" And the reply was, "Everybody's got their taters in but me." He was in trouble because his rheumatism prevented him setting his potatoes. Now it nowhere says in the Minutes of Conference or in Wesley's "Twelve Rules of a Helper" that a minister had to go and dig somebody else's potato patch, but my friend said, "Where is the spade?" And he took off his ministerial collar, and went into the garden and put the potatoes in, row after row, row after row. I take it that that was a service that the angels watched. He did not wait for a commandment; he followed the wishes of God.—*Thomas Champness*

669. I was sick and ye visited me, I was in prison and ye came unto me. (v. 36)

A gentleman on board a steamer saw late one evening an officer of the vessel go stealthily to a stateroom and deposit something, and close the door. He suspected it a case of some

dread disease. He went to the officers and pressed them for a true statement; at last they admitted that a priest on board had the yellow fever. The gentleman insisted on being shown to his room, where he found the poor man in great agony, and suffering for want of attention; he was tenderly cared for and recovered. Imagine the surprise of the gentleman when he found it to be a very dear friend of his boyhood days. Oh, the glad surprise awaiting those to whom Jesus will say: "I was sick and ye visited me, I was in prison and ye came unto me." "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

670. Relation of good works to Christianity. (v. 40)

Good works do not make a Christian; but one must be a Christian to do good works. The tree bringeth forth the fruit, not the fruit the tree. None is made a Christian by works, but by Christ; and being in Christ, he brings forth fruit for Him.—*Martin Luther*

671. Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least. (v. 40)

In a celebrated cemetery in Germany lies, beside a great poet, a plain man who was a trué friend of the people, a trainer of youth, a father of forsaken children. His epitaph reads: "Under this green linden, freed from sin through Jesus Christ, you will find John Falk. Let every strange child who visits this peaceful spot pray for him diligently. Because he took care of little children, receive him, Thy child, unto Thyself, O Lord."

672. Done to my friends is done to me. (v. 40)

Cicero writes thus to Platius, "I would have you think that whatever friendly service or good advice you shall bestow upon my friend Furnius, I shall take it as kindly as if it had been done to myself."

673. One of the least of these. (v. 40)

There is an Eastern story of a king who built a great temple at his own cost, no other one being allowed to do even the smallest part of the work. The king's name was put upon the temple as the builder of it. But, strange to say, when the dedication day came it was seen that a poor widow's name was there in place of the king's. The king was angry and gave command that the woman bearing the name on the scroll should be found. They discovered her at last among the very poor and brought her before the king. He demanded of her what she had done toward the building of the temple. She said, "Noth-

ing." When pressed to remember anything she had done, she said that one day when she saw the oxen drawing the great stones past her cottage, exhausted in the heat and very weary, she had in pity given them some wisps of hay. And this simple kindness to dumb animals, prompted by a heart's compassion, weighed more in God's sight than all the king's vast outlay of money. What we truly do for Christ and in love is glorious in His sight.

674. Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. (v. 40)

There is a legend which says it was the custom of St. Gregory, after he became pope, to entertain every evening at his own table twelve poor men, in memory of Christ's twelve apostles. It is said that one evening there were thirteen instead of twelve. He summoned his steward and asked how it happened. The steward counted and could make but twelve. At the end of the meal St. Gregory asked the unbidden guest who he was. "I am the poor man whom thou didst relieve. My name is *Wonderful,* through whom God will give whatsoever ye ask." St. Gregory knew he had been entertaining the Lord Jesus.

And so may we entertain him too, if we only open our hearts and bid Him come in. "Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man open, I will come in unto him."

On the other hand, we can never entertain Him until we empty our hearts of selfishness and give Him complete sway.—*"Sharpened Arrows"*

675. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed. (v. 41)

Dr. Chaffee gives us the following illustration: "Two brothers had from boyhood made their homes in a New England town. The elder had won a reputation as an attorney, while the younger had given himself over to evil habits. The younger brother was brought before the bar of justice, and his brother appeared, and pleaded for him; for his sake the culprit was released. Some time after, the younger brother disobeyed the law and was brought into court; again the faithful brother appeared and pleaded for him. Once more the guilty one was allowed to go free. Years passed, and at last the lawyer ascended the bench. One day they brought again the erring brother, on a criminal charge. But the judge's face was stern. "It is too late," he said. "As an advocate I could plead for you; as a judge I cannot. Arise and receive sentence."

Christ is now pleading before the Father for you, unsaved

soul, but there will come a time when you will stand before Him as a Judge. Will it then be too late? Will you reject His offers to secure your pardon, until He ascends the bench, and closes every avenue of mercy that He now holds out to you? I simply ask the question, and leave you to settle it in your own heart.

676. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment. (v. 46)

A venerable minister once preached a sermon on the last judgment. On the next day some thoughtless men agreed that one of their number should go to him, and, if possible, draw him into a discussion. He went accordingly, and began the conversation saying: "I believe there is a small dispute between you and me, and I thought I would call this morning and try to settle it." "Ah!" said the good man, "what is it?" "Why," he replied, "you say that the woe of the finally impenitent will be eternal, and I do not think it will." "Oh, if that is all," he answered, "there is no dispute between you and me. If you turn to Matthew 25:46, you will find that the dispute is between you and the Lord Jesus Christ, and I would advise you to go immediately and settle it with Him!"

677. Into everlasting punishment. (v. 46)

King Henry VIII of England asked for a glass of wine on his death bed, drank it and said to the bystanders: "Now, my friends, all is ended: the kingdom, the crown, the soul!" Truly a heathen confession from a man who called himself a Christian and aspired to be a reformer of the Catholic Church in England.

678. But the righteous into life eternal. (v. 46)

The church father, Augustine, prayed in his dying hour: "Let me die, O God, that I may live"! When Huss was being burned at the stake he raised his eyes to heaven and cried: "Lord Jesus, I commit my soul, which Thou hast redeemed, into Thy hands." When Luther's end was approaching he recalled and spoke the words in the 68th Psalm: "We have a God of deliverance, and a Lord who saves from death." Melanchton was asked if there was anything he desired and his reply was: "Nothing but heaven."

679. But the righteous into life eternal. (v. 46)

The saintly professor, Neander, a Jew, who had accepted his Messiah, died with the words: "Let us now go home."

The Twenty-seventh Sunday after Trinity

Matthew 25: 1-13

680. Faith is a lamp; and yet faith may not save. (v. 1)

It may be wanting in the love which purifies the heart, and it may be the gift of logic and not the gift of God, an intellectual apprehension and nothing more. A man may work out many principles and nothing efficiently; a lamp is for guidance; men are not saved by the lamp, nor without the lamp. Perhaps you remember how an old king of Sweden, walking on the road to Upsala, once had a long conversation with a farmer about religion, and it haunted him, for the farmer spoke of his feelings on religion with so much peace and rest and satisfaction. When the king lay on his death bed, and his mind was disturbed, the Archbishop of Upsala same to him. "What is faith?" said the king, and the archbishop discoursed to him eloquently and logically. "Ah," said the king, "that is all very ingenious! But it is not comfortable; it is not what I want; it's nothing, after all. What I want is the farmer's faith! nothing but the farmer's faith will do for me now." The lamp of faith is only an instrument. It needs oil; "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men; but in the power of God." Therefore arise and trim the lamp.—*Paxton Hood*

681. Reserve power the outcome of duty discipline. (v. 5)

We all know how true that is in common life. When in times of danger, some great leader comes suddenly to the front, and shows that he has the very qualities which the occasion needs, it will always be found that he has been preparing himself, unconsciously, perhaps, but really, for years, by the careful discipline of daily labor, for the work which is now so successfully performed by him. While others were asleep, he was at his toil: and by study of many earnest months, perhaps also by the labor of many midnight hours, he has been laying up that reserve supply, on which at that moment of necessity he has been able to draw. Thus, though the revelation of his ability may have been sudden, the growth of it has been gradual, and because in times of quiet and safety he kept up the discipline of work, the crisis which swept others into oblivion only floated him into fame.—*W. M. Taylor*

682. No grace to spare. (v. 8)

"Oh," says someone in this house: "I had a very good father and a very good mother; if there ever was a good woman, she was; and somehow I hope through their piety to get into heaven." Had they any surplus of piety? None. Had they any goodness to spare? None. You cannot borrow oil out of their lamps. There never was a better man than Jonathan Edwards, but he had no grace to spare for his son Pierrepont, who made an awful shipwreck. President Burr was a holy and consecrated man, but he had no grace to spare for Aaron Burr, whose life was a horrid debauch. And, I suppose, if at the last, all the redeemed of heaven were gathered in a circle, and some poor soul should go round and say: "Have you olive oil to spare? give me some for my lamp?" I suppose they would all answer: "Not so, lest there be not enough for us and for you." "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shall bear it." Every man for himself, every woman for herself.—*Talmage*

683. Reserve power helpful to achievement. (v. 9)

When the great Duke of Bridgewater undertook to construct those canals which lie at the root of the vast wealth of modern England, and had their part in the splendor of this metropolis, he found the strain so hard at last that he was glad to get a note accepted for five pounds. He gave up his princely mansion, lived in a small house, and clad himself so humbly that one day as he was standing by a great pile of his own coal, a boy, thinking he was a common person, cried, "Here, man, give us a lift with this sack!" He loved his bit of humor, so took hold with the boy, and got for his thanks, "Ah, man, thou's big enough, but thou's lazy!" He came at last to the end of his reserves of money and courage and on a Saturday night, sitting with Brindley, who had borne the burden with him, the mighty engineer said, "Well, Duke, don't be cast down, we are sure to pull through." They did pull through, and Brindley found strength for it in the last drips of oil in the vessel, but he found it; and the result was the first splendid stroke which set England on her feet, and gave you the port you wanted in Liverpool. —*R. Collyer*

684. The door of doom. (v. 10)

A lady, who heard Whitefield in Scotland preach on these words, being placed between two dashing young men, but at a considerable distance from the pulpit, witnessed their mirth,

and overheard one say, in a low tone, to the other, "Well, what if the door *be* shut? Another will open." Thus they turned off the solemn words of warning. Mr. Whitefield had not proceeded far when he said, "It is possible there may be some careless, trifling person here today, who may ward off the force of this impressive subject by lightly thinking, 'What matter if the door be shut? Another will open.' " The two young men were paralyzed, and looked at each other. Mr. Whitefield proceeded: "Yes, another *will* open. And I will tell you what door it will be: it will be the door of the bottomless pit! the door of hell! the door which conceals from the eyes of angels the horrors of damnation!"

685. The feeling of exclusion. (v. 10)

The poet Cowper tells us that, when under conviction of sin, he dreamed that he was walking in Westminster Abbey, waiting for prayers to begin. "Presently I heard the minister's voice, and hastened towards the choir. Just as I was upon the point of entering, the iron gate under the organ was flung in my face, with a jar that made the Abbey ring. The noise awakened me; and a sentence of excommunication from all the churches upon earth could not have been so dreadful to me as the interpretation which I could not avoid putting upon this dream."

686. The door an emblem of separation. (v. 10)

A door is a barrier which often separates two very unlike scenes. On one side, for instance, are green fields, and bright sunshine, and running streams, and happy laughter. On the other, the manacled forms of listless prisoners, the dark cell, the moan of despair, the vision of death. Or, outside are wild, sobbing, wintry winds, driving showers of hail and sleet, homeless wanderers, friendless outcasts; inside, bright light, abundant food, a warm hearth, and a cheerful circle of friends. Between such opposite scenes as these there is only a door. The real question in all such cases is, "Can I open that door? Can I pass through it?" If not, all the waters of the sea, all the mountains of the world, could not form a stronger barrier.—*G. Tugwell*

687. Too late. (v. 11, 12)

Have you not felt a fainting of heart, and a bitterness of spirit, when, after much preparation for an important journey

you have arrived at the appointed place, and found that the ship or train by which you had intended to travel had gone with all who were ready at the appointed time, and left you behind? Can you multiply finitude by infinitude? Can you conceive the dismay which will fill your soul if you come too late to the closed door of heaven, and begin the hopeless cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us"?—*William Arnot*

688. Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh. (v. 13)

In the midst of life we are in death. There was never a more striking illustration of this than in a thunderstorm on the Hudson, where a young officer of the Twenty-Second Regiment, militia, was sitting writing a letter in the Y. M. C. A. tent. There were several long tables in the tent, at which the men were accustomed to sit and write. Corporal McDonald and ten others sat at the table nearest the entrance. The young corporal had arranged to celebrate the end of the tour of camp duty on the following Saturday by getting married, and when the tent was struck by lightning, leaving its mark on the floor and furniture, he was writing to his betrothed. The letter was complete, and its last words were: "Yours until death." The date was to follow, but when the expectant bridegroom had written "State Cam—" the flash came and the pen stopped. The tour of duty was over; taps had been sounded; the lights were out. The best way to be ready to die is to live with reverent fidelity to duty. None of us ought to leave anything undone for first hours which may never be consciously known to us.

689. Half ready

A mother was seated at a table with her little son, a child about nine years old. She had been reading the Bible to him for some time. He had been very attentive to what she had said and seemingly a great deal impressed by it.

"It says in the Scripture," she said, " 'Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.' Now, this may be said in respect to death as well as to the coming of the Saviour; for we cannot tell how suddenly we may be called away from the world. Are you ready, my love, if it should please God to take you to Himself?"

The child replied after a few minutes of silence, "I think, mamma, I am only about half ready."

690. Time

In Tokyo, where the earthquake and fire spared nothing at all, there were silent clocks throughout the ruins registering two minutes to twelve. At two minutes to twelve thousands of dreams and purposes were scattered. More than a million people were driven from their homes never to return. Oh, what a change in an instant of time. But some day more people than were affected by that earthquake will be changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye. It will be a change from the passing things of time, to glory and life eternal. At another time, a vast company whose number is as the sands of the sea will also experience a change, but it will be the change to an eternity of doom.

All Saints' Day

Matthew 5: 1-12

691. Saint

Webster defines a "saint" as "a person who is sanctified or consecrated; a holy or godly person; one characterized by piety and virtue; a true Christian." This is actually what Christianity does for folks when it thoroughly grips the mind and heart. A saint is not a perfect person by any means. He is human and lives in a fleshly house. He makes some mistakes and is marked by imperfections. However, he aspires to be like Christ and accepts Christ as his Saviour and Master.

692. Blessedness

When we give up looking for happiness, we find blessedness.—*Carlyle*

693. The blessed are few

If we could see things as they are; if we were not deceived by the masquerade of this poor life; if we were not so easily taken in by the masks and dresses of those who act in this great drama, be it comedy or tragedy; if we could but see what the men are behind the scenes, penetrate their hearts, watch the inner motions, and discern their secret feelings,—we should find but few who could bear the name of "blessed."—*Spurgeon*

694. Blessed are ye. (v. 3-12)

The modern moving picture is merely a succession of rapidly taken photographs. The Beatitudes are a series of instantaneous photographs of the holy life. Christ brings them together, and shows them as one comprehensive view of true blessedness. Viewed separately they are incomplete, but seen as a whole they present His idea of the saintly character.

695. The Beatitudes. (v. 3-12)

The Beatitudes found in Matthew 5: 3-12 show what God's viewpoint is concerning the most vital things of life. By way of contrast the Beatitudes of worldly folks may be summarized as follows:

"Blessed are the rich, for they shall live in beautiful mansions."

"Blessed are the famous, for they shall move among the influential."

"Blessed are the cultured, for they shall be recognized of men."

"Blessed are the conquerors, for they shall be applauded by the world."

"Blessed are the successful, for they shall have the best of the earth."

"Blessed are the politicians, for theirs is honor among men."

"Blessed are they who attain social distinction, for theirs is an earthly paradise."

"Blessed are the selfish, for they shall have a good time."

"Blessed are the money-makers, for they shall have every bodily wish gratified."

696. The Sermon on the Mount.

I wonder if any of you have ever had the feeling that has come to me in reading Christ's Sermon on the Mount. It is a feeling of great distance and almost intolerable remoteness, a feeling as if one should come to a mighty cliff, towering far up into heaven, crowned with eternal beauty and radiance, and hear a voice crying from that far height, "Come up hither and dwell with me!" When I listen to those wonderful beatitudes, when I hear those searching demands for a purity which is stainless in deed, in word, in thought, and in feeling, when I see how strait is the gate and how narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, a sense of utter helplessness sweeps through me and my spirit is overwhelmed within me.—*Henry Van Dyke*

697. Blessed are the poor in spirit. (v. 3)

Samuel Rutherford was not lacking in boldness when he felt it his duty to give correction. To a wealthy laird, who was getting a little wrong in his spiritual life, he said in a letter: "Read over your life with the light of God's daylight on it. Be humble, man; walk softly. Down, down, for God's sake, with your topsail. Stoop, man, stoop; it is a low entry at Heaven's gate."

698. Blessed are they that mourn. (v. 4)

We all, in turn, must face our forlorn hours of bereavement. For us, sooner or later, our house must be left unto us desolate. But . . . . these natural sorrows are, and are meant to be, full of blessedness; the light of God shining upon them transmutes them into heavenly gold. The wounds which God makes God heals. The fire which kindles the grains of frankincense upon

His altar at the same time brings out their fragrancy. All that He sends, if borne submissively, becomes rich in mercy. Upon the troubled soul which seeks Him His consolations increase "with the gentleness of a sea which caresses the shore it covers."—*Canon Farrar*

699. Blessing of the Meek. (v. 5)

It is in the lowly valley that the sun's warmth is truly genial; unless, indeed, there are mountains so close and abrupt as to overshadow it. Then noisome vapors may be bred there; but otherwise in the valley may we behold the meaning of the wonderful blessing bestowed upon the meek, that they shall inherit the earth. It is theirs for this very reason, that they do not seek it. They do not exalt their heads like icebergs, which, by the by, are driven away from earth, and cluster, or rather jostle, around the pole; but they flow along the earth humbly and silently: and, wherever they flow, they bless it; and so all its beauty and all its richness are reflected in their pure, calm, peaceful bosoms.—*Hare*

700. Power of meekness

Sir Walter Raleigh, a man of courage and honor, was once insulted by a hotheaded youth, who challenged him, and, on his refusal, spat upon him in public. The knight, taking out his handkerchief, made this reply: "Young man, if I could as easily wipe your blood from my conscience as I can this injury from my face, I would this moment take away your life." The youth was so struck with a strong sense of his misbehavior that he fell upon his knees, and begged forgiveness.

701. Example of meekness

When Sir Matthew Hale dismissed a jury because he was convinced that it had been illegally chosen to favor the Protector, the latter was highly displeased with him; and, when Sir Matthew returned from the circuit, Cromwell told him in anger that he was not fit to be a judge; to which all the answer that he made was, *that it was very true.*

702. Meek, defined

A missionary in Jamaica once asked the question of a black boy when examining the school upon this verse, "Who are the meek?" The boy answered, "Those who give soft answers to rough questions."

703. Blessed are the pure in heart. (v. 8)

Among the doctrines of Belial is the theory that we must familiarize ourselves with evil if we would have the power to resist it.

John Francois Millet in the middle of the last century was engaged on his early pictures. As they appeared one after another they astonished and delighted all lovers of art throughout the world. What were the subjects of these wonderful paintings? They were all deeply religious:—the "Angelus," the "Sower," the "Man with the Hoe," the "Winnower," the "Gleaners." These masterpieces were not only spiritual, but were replete with beauty, pathos, power, and with all the works of the highest genius. Now, the theory had been popular that an artist must revel in fleshly and voluptuous presentations of life. But Millet hated the salaciousness of Greece, and Rome was abhorrent to him. He was a lifelong lover of his Bible, and his life was one of devotion and purity.

704. Blessed are the peacemakers. (v. 9)

A peace is of the nature of a conquest;
For then both parties nobly are subdued,
And neither party loser.—*Shakespeare.*

705. Blessed are the peacemakers. (v. 9)

Stanton called Lincoln a low, cunning clown, not fit to mix with cultured society, and nicknamed him the original gorilla, having said that Du Chaillu was a fool to go to Africa in search of the missing-link when he could have found it at Springfield, Illinois. Lincoln, in after years, knowing what Stanton had said, made Stanton Secretary of War, because he was the best man for the place. When Stanton stood beside Lincoln's body he exclaimed:

"There lies the greatest ruler of men the world has seen."

Blessed are peacemakers who bridge the gulf between men and women.

Thanksgiving Day

706. Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving makes our prayers bold and strong and sweet; feeds and enkindles them as with coals of fire.—*Luther*

707. The thankful heart

A thankful heart is not only the greatest virtue, but the parent of all the other virtues.—*Cicero*

708. Dumb thanksgiving

A dumb love is acceptable only from the lower animals.—*Henry Van Dyke*

709. Those who don't return thanks

An honest farmer was asked to dine with a gentleman, and there asked a blessing at table as he was accustomed to do at home. His host said jeeringly, "That is old fashioned, it is not customary for well educated people to pray at table." The farmer answered that with him it was customary, but that some of his household never prayed over their food. "Ah, then," said the gentleman, "they are sensible and enlightened. Who are they?" The farmer answered, "They are my pigs."—*"London Sunday School Times"*

710. The solace of thanks

Even "hello girls" are tired sometimes, though we think of them as part of the electrical apparatus. Today Central was tired, her head ached, she had just succeeded after repeated calls, in getting the number wanted by 349M, and here they were, calling her up again! "Can't that woman be quiet a minute?" soliloquized Central while she reiterated, "Number, please?" trying not to speak crossly. "Central," said a pleasant voice, "I want to thank you for taking so much trouble to get me that last number. You are always very kind and obliging, and I do appreciate it." The surprise was so great, so overwhelming, that Central could only murmur confusedly, "I—oh—yes, ma'am." Nothing like this had ever happened before. Suddenly her headache was better, suddenly the day was brighter, suddenly, too, there came a lump in her throat, and she reached for her handkerchief. It was so good to be thanked.

711. Thanks

A little scene of child life has often seemed to me to contain the most touching lesson for men. A child knows when it receives a service from any one that it should say, Thank you. But, often, when a child renders us a service, we forget to thank him. After having waited in vain for the little word which should be pronounced, then himself says, "Thank you," and goes his way. The child has a feeling that something ought to happen and does not; then he takes charge of it himself.—*Charles Wagner*

712. Expressing thanks

A writer tells of a visit to the famous Calumet and Hecla mines in northern Michigan shortly before five o'clock in the afternoon. As they came to the mouth of the mine, a friend said to him, "Stand here and listen." There was silence for a moment and, coming from the earth beneath their feet, faint sounds were heard. They grew stronger and more distinct as they waited, seeming like the weird melodies played by the wind on telegraph wires. Nearer and nearer they came, mingled with the creaking of machinery, and resolving themselves at last into the familiar notes of "Nearer, my God, to Thee." In a moment the cage reached the top of the shaft and the day shift of Welsh miners, who had been singing their way up from a depth of hundreds of feet, stepped out, and, baring their heads, joined in "Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow," and then turned homeward. "They do this every night when their work is done," said the friend. "It is their expression of praise and thanksgiving."

713. Gratitude awakening

A certain beggar was crying out along the street that he was the brother of a king and yet he had no shoes. "What a shame," he said, "that a king's brother should go barefoot!" Then he saw a poor fellow carried by who had lost his feet, and filled with shame he began to thank God that he still had his own feet, though they were unshod.

714. The grateful man

Let the man, who would be grateful, think of repaying a kindness, even while receiving it.—*Seneca*

715. Let's hem our blessings!

Thomas Fuller wrote: "Many favors which God hath given us ravel out for want of hemming, through our unthankfulness."

716. Thanksgiving.

The roar of the world is in my ears;
Thank God for the roar of the world;
Thank God for the mighty tide of fears
Against me always hurled.

Thank God for the bitter and ceaseless strife,
And the sting of His chastening rod;
Thank God for the stress and the pain of life,
And oh! thank God for God!—*Joyce Kilmer.*

717. Have we said "thank you?"

A lady was visiting a hospital. She went up to a bed on which lay a wounded soldier, and said gently, "Thank you for being wounded for me." The man's face brightened. That was a new thought to him; it made the pain more bearable to look upon it in that light. Do you realize that long ago Some One was wounded for you? And that "Some One" was no less than the Son of God Himself.—*"Sunday School Chronicle"*

718. We have most to be thankful for

I'm going to catch you on the most self-evident proposition: Americans have more to be thankful for than all the rest of the world combined. Doesn't your heart grow sick when you read what returning travelers tell of what they saw in Germany, Russia, Greece, Turkey, etc.? How could Europe be thankful? How can nervous, apprehensive France? How can burdened, unemployed England? And, when you think of the Armenians, you shudder and sigh.

Why, every religious meeting we hold ought to be a thanksgiving service. Yet at our organ pavilion in Balboa Park last Thanksgiving, where all the Protestant churches met to give thanks for national blessing, there weren't half so many people as assembled in the stadium in the afternoon for the football game.—*John F. Cowan*

719. Thanksgiving day

After Armistice Day comes Thanksgiving Day. This should be the happiest and most joyful in all the three hundred and sixty-five days of any year of grace, save Christmas. It is supremely the family day, a day dedicated to home, home memories and home ties, a day when father and mother and all the children can sit around the common board, the day for the reunion of families which for the rest of the year are far separated, the day for grandfathers and grandmothers, fathers and mothers, and all the children, down to the youngest toddler.

There is also an Unseen Guest at these Thanksgiving tables. He is not always recognized by any means; no chair has been set for Him; there is no thought of His presence on the part of many.

Thanksgiving Day should be a day of blessed memories, memories of the Pilgrim Fathers who inaugurated the day, memories of the blessed ones of the family circle who have crossed the river, memories of God's goodness to our country, the country which He has brought through so many crises and is constantly enlarging and blessing. Should it not, indeed, be a holy day?

720. Strangers yet

There is a grim little poem written by the Russian Turgeneff. It describes how the different Christian graces were invited to a banquet in heaven, and how they gathered in easy and unconstrained fashion because they already knew one another so well. But there was an exception. "Benevolence and Gratitude alone of all seemed strangers yet; they stared when they were introduced; on earth they never once had met." "Never once" is unjust and oversevere; but, none the less, Benevolence and Gratitude meet on earth far too seldom.—*Alexander Smellie*

Reformation

721. Martin Luther's conscience

Martin Luther, the giant of the Middle Ages, rather than go contrary to his conscience and do an act unworthy of a man, exclaimed in tones of thunder that echoed around the world: "If I had a thousand heads I would lose them all rather than recant."

722. Churches and jails

It costs fifty million a year to run the churches and four hundred million to run the jails. We pay eight times as much for running our fellow men down and jailing them as we do in trying to make them better so that they will not need the jail.

723. A mighty fortress

It was in the year 1870, at the outbreak of the war between Germany and France. In a great auditorium in a German city several thousand people were assembled. Patriotic selections were played and the entire audience was in a state of excitement. Then the cry arose: "The March into Paris." The conductor hesitated a moment, nodded, spoke softly to the musicians, lifted his baton and through the auditorium the mighty chords of the choral "A mighty fortress is our God" resounded. Few sang but many stood with tears in their eyes. Never before had Germans listened to so impressive and earnest a sermon.

724. The Church

That the Church of the Reformation has always realized the high and noble conception of her ministry, that at this hour she is measuring up to it, no sane church member, however loyal, will pretend. Indeed, as everyone knows, the direct charge of failure has been repeatedly brought against her. Thus Tennyson:

> "But the churchmen fain would kill their Church,
> As the churches have killed their Christ!"

Less bitterly, but not less vigorously an American poet writes:

"The one named Christ I sought for many days,
In many places vainly;
I heard men name His name in many ways;
I saw His temples plainly:
But they who named Him most gave me no sign
To find Him by, or prove His heirship mine."

725. Worthy sons and daughters of the Church

There are in America organizations known as the Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution. These societies are composed of men and women who are direct descendents of those who figured actively and honorably in the task of securing American Independence and bringing this country into existence as a nation. Their task is to gather and preserve the history of the valour which brought our country into being and thus inspire present-day Americans to be noble sons of their heroic ancestors. As Sons and Daughters of the Church of the Reformation we have the task of studying and applying our wonderful history in such a way as to inspire our young Christians of today to prove worthy sons of their noble sires by adding new and beautiful pages of achievement to our Church's splendid history.—*W. L. Hunton*

INDEX OF SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Matthew 2: 1 ..... 98, 99, 100, 101
Matthew 2: 2 ..... 102, 103
Matthew 2: 9 104
Matthew 2: 11 ..... 105, 106, 107
Matthew 2: 13 86
Matthew 2: 14 87
Matthew 2: 15 88
Matthew 2: 16 ..... 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 97
Matthew 2: 19 94
Matthew 2: 22 95
Matthew 2: 23 96
Matthew 4: 1-11 ..... 216, 219
Matthew 4: 2 204
Matthew 4: 3 205
Matthew 4: 4 ..... 206, 207
Matthew 4: 6 208
Matthew 4: 9 210
Matthew 4: 10 ..... 211, 212, 213, 214
Matthew 5: 3 697
Matthew 5: 3-12 ..... 694, 695
Matthew 5: 4 698
Matthew 5: 5 699
Matthew 5: 8 703
Matthew 5: 9 ..... 704, 705
Matthew 5: 20 ..... 439, 440, 441
Matthew 5: 22 ..... 442, 443, 444
Matthew 5: 23 445
Matthew 5: 24 446
Matthew 5: 25 ..... 447, 448
Matthew 6: 24 ..... 547, 548, 549, 550, 551
Matthew 6: 25 552
Matthew 6: 32 553
Matthew 6: 33 ..... 554, 555, 556
Matthew 6: 34 ..... 557, 558
Matthew 7: 15 ..... 459, 460
Matthew 7: 16 ..... 461, 462, 463, 464, 465
Matthew 7: 17 466
Matthew 7: 21 ..... 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472
Matthew 8: 1-13 ..... 144, 145, 146, 147
Matthew 8: 2 ..... 137, 138
Matthew 8: 3 ..... 139, 140, 141, 142
Matthew 8: 13 143
Matthew 8: 23 ..... 148, 149
Matthew 8: 24 150
Matthew 8: 25 ..... 151, 152
Matthew 8: 26 ..... 153, 154, 155
Matthew 8: 27 156
Matthew 9: 2 ..... 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599
Matthew 9: 5 ..... 600, 601
Matthew 9: 20 ..... 642, 643
Matthew 9: 21 644
Matthew 9: 22 645
Matthew 9: 23 ..... 646, 647, 648

Matthew 9: 24 .....649, 651, 652
Matthew 11: 2 .....26, 27, 28
Matthew 11: 3 .....29, 30
Matthew 11: 4 .....31, 32
Matthew 11: 5 .....33, 34
Matthew 11: 7 35
Matthew 11: 9 36
Matthew 13: 24 .....159, 160
Matthew 13: 25 .....161, 162, 163
Matthew 13: 30 .....164, 165
Matthew 14: 16 457
Matthew 15: 21 220
Matthew 15: 22 .....221, 222
Matthew 15: 23 224
Matthew 15: 25 .....225, 226
Matthew 15: 26 227
Matthew 15: 27 .....228, 229, 230
Matthew 15: 28 231
Matthew 17: 1 167
Matthew 17: 1-9 167
Matthew 17: 2 169
Matthew 17: 8 171
Matthew 18: 25 623
Matthew 18: 27 .....624, 625, 626, 627, 628
Matthew 18: 28 629
Matthew 18: 33 .....630, 631
Matthew 20: 3 173
Matthew 20: 4 .....174, 175
Matthew 20: 6 .....176, 177, 178
Matthew 20: 7 179
Matthew 20: 12 180
Matthew 20: 14 .....181, 182, 183
Matthew 20: 16 184
Matthew 21: 1 .....262, 263
Matthew 21: 1-9 13
Matthew 21: 5 .....5, 6
Matthew 21: 7 7
Matthew 21: 8 .....8, 264, 265, 266, 268, 269, 270
Matthew 21: 9 .....9, 10, 11, 265, 271, 272, 273
Matthew 22: 2 602
Matthew 22: 3 603
Matthew 22: 4 .....604, 605
Matthew 22: 5 606
Matthew 22: 9 607
Matthew 22: 11 .....608, 609
Matthew 22: 12 .....610, 611
Matthew 22: 13 612
Matthew 22: 17 .....633, 634, 635
Matthew 22: 19 .....636, 637
Matthew 22: 21 .....638, 639, 640
Matthew 22: 36 584
Matthew 22: 37 585
Matthew 22: 39 .....586, 587, 588
Matthew 22: 40 589
Matthew 22: 42 .....590, 591, 592
Matthew 22: 46 593
Matthew 24: 27 .....654, 655
Matthew 24: 28 .....656, 657, 658
Matthew 25: 1 680
Matthew 25: 5 681

Matthew 25: 8 682
Matthew 25: 9 683
Matthew 25: 10 ....684, 685, 686
Matthew 25: 11, 12 687
Matthew 25: 13 688
Matthew 25: 32 ....659, 660, 661, 662, 663
Matthew 25: 35 ....664, 665, 666
Matthew 25: 36 ....667, 668, 669
Matthew 25: 40 ....670, 671, 672, 673, 674
Matthew 25: 41 675
Matthew 25: 46 ....676, 677, 678, 679
Mark 7: 32 ....509, 510, 511, 512, 513
Mark 7: 34 ....515, 516, 517
Mark 7: 37 518
Mark 8: 2 450
Mark 8: 6 ....451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456
Mark 8: 8 458
Mark 16: 2 275
Mark 16: 6 ....276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283
Mark 16: 7 284
Mark 16: 15 336
Mark 16: 18 338
Mark 16: 19 339
Luke 2: 7 49
Luke 2: 10 ....50, 51
Luke 2: 11 52
Luke 2: 12 53
Luke 2: 14 ....54, 55
Luke 2: 17 ....56, 57
Luke 2: 19 58
Luke 2: 21 ....71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76
Luke 2: 34 ....60, 61, 62, 63
Luke 2: 35 64
Luke 2: 37 ....65, 66
Luke 2: 41 111
Luke 2: 43 112
Luke 2: 44 113
Luke 2: 45 113
Luke 2: 46 ....114, 115, 116
Luke 2: 47 117
Luke 2 :48 118
Luke 2: 49 ....119, 120, 121
Luke 2: 51 122
Luke 5: 3 ....427, 428
Luke 5: 4 ....429, 430
Luke 5: 10 ....431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436
Luke 5: 11 ....437, 438
Luke 6: 36 ....410, 411
Luke 6: 37 ....412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418
Luke 6: 38 ....419, 420, 421
Luke 6: 41 422
Luke 6: 42 ....423, 424, 425, 426
Luke 7: 12 ....559, 560, 561, 562
Luke 7: 13 ....563, 564, 565, 566, 567
Luke 7: 14 568
Luke 8: 5 ....185, 186
Luke 8: 7 187
Luke 8: 8 ....188, 189, 190, 191, 192
Luke 8: 11 193
Luke 9: 28 170

Luke 10: 27 .....522, 523, 524
Luke 10: 28 525
Luke 10: 29 .....526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531
Luke 10: 33 .....532, 533, 534
Luke 10: 34, 35 535
Luke 11: 14 .....232, 233
Luke 11: 15 234
Luke 11: 17 .....235, 236
Luke 11: 22 .....237, 238
Luke 11: 23 .....239, 240
Luke 11: 26 241
Luke 11: 27 242
Luke 14: 1 .....569, 570, 571, 572
Luke 14: 3 .....573, 574, 575
Luke 14: 3-5 576
Luke 14: 8 577
Luke 14: 9 578
Luke 14: 10 .....579, 580, 581
Luke 14: 11 .....582, 583
Luke 14: 16 387
Luke 14: 17 388
Luke 14: 18 .....389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395
Luke 14: 23 .....396, 397
Luke 15: 2 .....399, 400
Luke 15: 4 .....401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407
Luke 15: 8 408
Luke 15: 10 409
Luke 16: 1-9 .....473, 474, 475, 476
Luke 16: 1 .....477, 478
Luke 16: 2 479
Luke 16: 6 .....480, 481
Luke 16: 7 482
Luke 16: 8 .....483, 484
Luke 16: 9 485
Luke 16: 19 .....375, 376, 377
Luke 16: 19, 20 376
Luke 16: 19-21 377
Luke 16: 22 .....378, 379
Luke 16: 23 380
Luke 16: 25 .....381, 382, 383, 384
Luke 16: 26 385
Luke 16: 31 386
Luke 17: 17 .....536, 537, 538, 539
Luke 17: 18 .....540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545
Luke 18: 9 .....494, 495, 496
Luke 18: 10 497
Luke 18: 11 .....498, 499, 500
Luke 18: 13 .....501, 502, 503, 504, 506
Luke 18: 14 .....507, 508
Luke 18: 31 .....195, 196, 197
Luke 18: 35 .....198, 199, 200
Luke 18: 37 .....201, 202
Luke 18: 42 203
Luke 19: 41 .....486, 487, 488, 489
Luke 19: 43 490
Luke 19: 44 .....490, 491, 492, 493
Luke 21: 26 16
Luke 21: 27 .....14, 15
Luke 21: 33 .....17, 18, 19
Luke 21: 34 .....20, 21

Luke 21: 36 .....22, 23, 24, 25
John 1: 19 38
John 1: 20 .....37, 39, 40
John 1: 23 .....41, 42
John 1: 26 43
John 1: 27 .....44, 45, 46, 47
John 2: 2 .....123, 124, 125
John 2: 4 .....126, 127
John 2: 5 .....128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133
John 2: 9 134
John 2: 11 135
John 3: 1 364
John 3: 2 .....365, 366, 367
John 3: 3 .....368, 369, 370, 371
John 3: 5 372
John 3: 10 373
John 3: 14 374
John 4: 46 614
John 4: 48 615
John 4. 49 .....616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622
John 6: 10 244
John 6: 11 245
John 6: 12 .....246, 247, 248, 249
John 8: 46 .....250, 251, 252, 253, 254
John 8: 49 .....255, 256, 257
John 8: 51 258
John 8: 54 259
John 8: 55 260
John 8: 59 261
John 10: 3 300
John 10: 4 299
John 10: 9 .....301, 304
John 10: 11 .....294, 295
John 10: 14 296
John 10: 15 .....297, 298
John 10: 16 303
John 14: 26 .....351, 353
John 14: 27 .....352, 354, 355, 356, 357
John 14: 30 358
John 15: 2 .....343, 344
John 15: 27 .....341, 342
John 16: 2 .....343, 344
John 16: 8 .....317, 318
John 16: 10 319
John 16: 12 320
John 16: 13 321
John 16: 15 322
John 16: 16 306
John 16: 19 307
John 16: 20 .....308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315
John 16: 22 316
John 16: 23 .....324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330
John 16: 24 .....331, 332
John 16: 26 .....333, 334
John 20: 24 .....285, 286
John 20: 25 .....287, 288, 289, 290
John 20: 27 291
John 20: 28 292
John 20: 29 293

INDEX OF SUBJECTS

A

Advent 1, 2
Advent, Second 5, 14, 15, 20, 25
Adversity 144, 145, 146, 147
Affliction 306, 307, 311, 313, 315
Aged, Honor the 67
Allenby, General 7
Anger 442, 443, 444, 449
Animosity 632
Appetite 205
Appreciation 541, 544, 546
Ascension, The 335

B

Bartimeus 198
Beatitudes 695
Beneficence 613
Bereavement 646, 647, 648
Bible 209
Blessedness 242, 272, 692, 693, 694, 697, 698, 699, 703, 704, 705
Blindness 200
Boy 113
Business, My Father's 120, 121
Busy 119

C

Cæsar 633, 638, 639
Charity 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669
Cheer, Good 645
Children, Early instruction of 122
Children in the Temple 114, 115
Christ, a Shepherd 294
Christ, as King 5, 6, 11, 12
Christ, finding the lost 402
Christ, fulfills prophecies 196
Christ, is risen 281, 283
Christ, our peace 355
Christ, Resource of 243
Christ, reveals hearts 64
Christ, sinless 250, 253
Christ, the Door 301, 304
Christ, Transforming power of 172, 261
Christ, Triumphal progress of 264
Christ, What think ye of 590, 591, 592
Christian evidence 470
Christian profession 468
Christianity, Good works and 670
Christianity is universal 30
Christmas, Gift of Peace 55
Christmas legend, A 48
Christmas motto, A 54
Christmas, The first 50

Church attendance 111, 286
Church, a ship, The 428
Coin, The Lost 408
Comfort 645
Comfort in a cloud 339
Comfort in bereavement 567, 647
Commandment, The great 584
Commandments, Condensed 523
Compassion 450, 565, 566
Confessing Christ 40, 348
Conscience 635, 636, 637
Consecration, Entire 13
Conversion 316
Cost reckoned 247
Courage 40
Cross lifts up 374
Cruelty 97

D

Danger, Disguised 460
Death 385, 475, 559, 561, 562, 616, 619, 620, 621, 622, 650, 651, 652
Death, A pathetic 378
Death, After 379
Death, The Black 52
Death, The Vanquisher of 280
Deeds not appearances 472
Defeat, No provision for 397
Devil 212, 213, 216, 237, 241, 358
Devils cast out 232, 233, 234
Didymus 285
Difficulties, Ministry of 312
Doom, The door of 684
Door 686
Doubt 293
Doubt, Christ dispels 29
Doubt, Is your . . . . honest 288
Dove of Peace 352
Duty a discipline 681
Duty and courage 346

E

Easter, the Russian 279
Egypt, The flight into 87
Ephphatha 199
Eternity 166
Excuses 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395
Extravagance, Wanton 375

F

Faith 151, 228, 231, 293, 680
Family devotions 125
Family life 124
Faults, Others 423, 424, 425
Fear 155, 366
Feast, Invitation to 388, 396, 604, 605, 607
Feast, The Marriage 602
Fishers of men 431, 434, 436
Fishing 429, 430
"Follow Me" 438

Food, Miraculous 456
Food, Providential 454
Forgiveness 413, 414, 417, 445, 446, 447, 448, 594, 596, 598, 599, 601, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629 630 631
Forty Days 204
Fragments, Gathering Up 246, 248, 249, 458
Fruits, Known by 462, 463, 464, 465
Funeral of a home, The 560
Funeral sermons, Jesus' 568
Future, Dodging the 82

G

Garments in the way 266, 269, 270
Giving 106, 107, 110, 419, 420, 421, 457, 480, 481
God, Glory ascribed to 257
God, Honor to 256, 259
God, Our knowledge of 260
God provides 452, 457
God still lives 16
God's Grace 322
God's Promises 490
God's Protection 86, 553, 554
God's Word, Rely on 33
God's works reveal Him 31, 32, 34
Gold, frankincense, and myrrh 105, 107
Good Samaritan 533
Goodness, Occasional 575
Gospel, Proclaim the 336, 337
Grace, Our day of 492
Grace to spare, No 682
Grateful Man, The 714
Gratitude 541, 720
Gratitude Awakening 713

H

Hands 291
Hearing 189, 190, 191, 192, 320
Heart, The thankful 707
Heavenward, Looking 340
Hell, The door of 684
Hell, Where is 380
Herod 89, 90, 94
Hindrances, a help 615
Hold fast 225
Holy Ghost (Spirit) 319, 321
Holy Ghost, Personality of 351
Holy Ghost, Right relation to 353
Honesty 473
Hosanna 9, 271
House divided 235, 236
Human fallibility 251, 252
Humility 45, 46, 47, 501, 506, 507, 508, 577, 579, 580, 581

I

Idleness 176, 177
Ingratitude 536, 539, 542, 543, 715
Inn, No room in the 49
Innocence, The 89, 91, 92, 93

J

Jerusalem 263, 653
Jesus, Bring them to 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 597
Jesus, Circumcision of 71
Jesus cleanses 140
Jesus gives life 141
Jesus gives peace 354
Jesus knows us 296
Jesus, Name of 73, 74, 75, 76
Jesus, Nothing but 171
Jesus, passeth by 201, 202
Jesus, Power of 154
Jesus, Purity of 254
Jesus, Stand up for 347
Jesus, Sufferings of 195
Jesus, the Stronger One 238
Jesus weeping (wept) 468, 488, 489
Jewesses 275
John the Baptist 26
John the Baptist in prison 28
Joy 136, 409
Judge not 416, 418
Judgment, False 412
Judgment, Forbearing 416
Judgment, The 611, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 675, 676

K

Kindness 443
Kingdom of God, Seek the 555, 556

L

Late, Too 493, 687
Least, One of the 671, 672, 673
Lepers, Modern 536
Leprosy 138, 139
Life, Eternal 678, 679
Life, Sanitary order of 656
Lightning out of the east 654, 655
Looking up 515, 516, 517, 519, 520, 521
Lord, help me 226
Lost, Seeking the 407
Love 585
Love, Brotherly 532
Love of a mother 221, 222
Love of a pastor 223
Love, origin of 410
Love, The tears of 489
Love, Thou shalt 522
Love thy neighbor 524, 587, 588
Luke Fifteen 398

M

Man, The impotence of 152
Mary 63
Materialism 606
Meditation 188
Meekness 700, 701, 702
Memory 381, 382, 383, 384
Mercy, Origin of 410
Mercy, Provision for 411

Message, A night 51
Miracle, A constant 245
Missions 108, 109, 110, 220, 336
Mother 118
Mother's love, A 221, 222

N

Nazareth 96
Neighbor 526, 527, 528, 530, 531
Neutrality 547
New Birth 368, 369, 370, 371
New Year 68, 77, 83, 84, 85
Nicodemus 364, 365, 367

O

Obedience 126, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133
One, whom ye know not 43
Order reversed 184

P

Parents 112
Passover, The 4
Peace 158, 356
Peace, Christ's legacy of 357
Peace, Jesus gives 354
Peace, The Dove of 352
Pentecost 349, 350
Persistence 224
Pharisee 497, 498, 499, 500
Power, Reserve 681, 683
Praise, not flattery 36
Prayer 79, 170, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 617, 618
Prayer, Humble 229, 230
Prayer, Importance of 324
Prayer, Power of 333
Prayer, Sin hinders 334
Preaching 387
Preaching, True 42
Pride 498, 578, 582, 583
Prophets, False 459
Publican 497, 503, 504
Punishment 676, 677

R

Ready, Being 21, 23
Ready, Half 689
Religion 136, 467, 494, 495, 496
Resurrection 274, 276, 278, 282, 283
Reward 181, 182, 183
Reward, God our 180
Righteousness 440, 441

S

Sabbath 569, 571
Sabbath Breaker 569, 573
Sacrifice 437
Sagacity 483
Saint 691
Satan (See Devil)

Scavengers 657, 658
Scorn 649
Seed, Good 160, 185, 186, 187, 193, 194
Sermon on the Mount 696
Servant of the Lord, An aged 60
Service 576
Serving two masters 548, 549, 550, 551
Sheep, In search of stray 405
Sheep know the shepherd 299
Sheep, no instinct to return 406
Sheep, Seeking a lost 403
Shepherd, The Good 294, 295, 297, 298, 299, 300, 401
Ship 148, 153
Ship, the unsinkable 149
Shoes, Bearing the 44
Sick healed, The 338
Sickness, Benefit of 614
Sight restored 203
Simeon 60, 62
Sin 317, 318, 600
Sin hinders prayer 334
Sincerity 469, 471
Sinners 400
Sinners, Christ's demeanor toward 399
Sins 117
Skeptic convinced 290
Sleep, Death a 650, 651, 652
Sorrow 136, 310, 314
Soul 435
Soul health 142
Soul, Yearning of the 359
Spiritual births 373
Spiritual food 207
Spiritual influence 372
Spiritual power 157
Star, The 103
Star of right, The 104
Stewardship 479, 484, 485, 640
Suffering 137, 324, 534
Suffering, Indifference to 377
Suffering, Luxury disregarding 376
Sunday 570, 572
Sunday, The last . . . . of the year 59
Sunday religion 574
Surrender necessary 292
Sympathy 139, 563, 564, 565

T

Tares 161, 162, 163
Teaching, Tact in 404
Temptation 210, 211, 214, 215, 217, 218, 219
Temptation and holiness 208
Testimony, Our 37
Thanks 711
Thanks, Expressing 712
Thanks, Giving 451, 453, 455, 717
Thanks, The solace of 710
Thanksgiving 537, 538, 545, 706, 708, 716, 718, 719
Thomas 285, 286, 289
Time 690

Time, End of 69, 70, 78
Time of visitation 491
Touch Christ 642, 643, 644
Transfiguration 167, 168
Trials 308
Trials conducive to growth 309
Trials enlarge the vision 306, 307
Trials necessary 344
Tribulation (See Trials) ....
Tribulation Defined 343
Tribute 633, 634
Trinty, Derivation of 360
Trinity, Glory to the 361
Trinity in the flag 363
Trinity, Incomprehensibility of 362
Triumphal Entry 262, 265, 273
Trouble from a trifle 552

V

Victoria, Queen 10
Vindictiveness 426

W

Waste, Utilization of 249
Watch and pray 22, 24, 688
Water made wine 134, 135
Wealth 481, 482
Wedding, Christ at a 123
Wedding garment 608, 609, 610
Weeping and gnashing of teeth 612
Wheat and tares 159, 164, 165
Wise men of the east 98, 99, 100, 101, 102
Witnessbearing 341, 342
Woman 127
Word, Authority of 156
Word, The Divine 143
Word, The enduring 17, 18, 19
Work 174, 175, 178, 179
Worldliness 476

Y

Years, Our 80
Youth 173

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